

STORIES FROM SCOTLAND YARD

BY INSPECTOR MOSER AND CHARLES FRIDEAL



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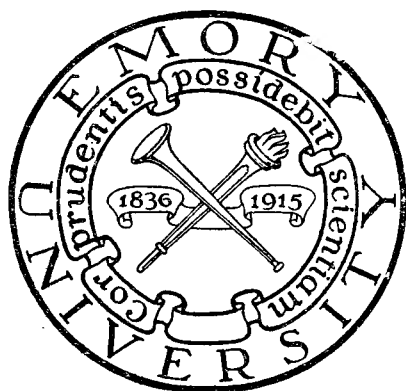
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STORIES
FROM SCOTLAND YARD.

STORIES

FROM

SCOTLAND YARD

AS TOLD BY

INSPECTOR MOSER,

LATE OF THE CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION DEPARTMENT, WHITEHALL,

AND RECORDED BY

CHARLES F. RIDEAL,

AUTHOR OF "PEOPLE WE MEET," ETC.

LONDON

GEORGE ROUTLEDGE AND SONS, LIMITED

BROADWAY, LUDGATE HILL

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INTRODUCTION.

THESE stories, which are all founded upon actual experiences and facts, originally appeared (through the medium of the "Central Press") in a syndicate of newspapers. They secured considerable attention at the time, both in London and the provinces, not perhaps through any particular merit they possessed as "Revelations," for they are studiously devoid of sensationalism, but for the more simple reason that the name of "Scotland Yard" has an attraction for most people, other than those of the criminal classes.

They have been revised and put into book form at the suggestion of many kind friends who have been good enough to overlook their faults.

MAURICE MOSER,
CHARLES F. RIDEAL.

LONDON, 1890.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
"ON MORTGAGE"	9
A DISCOVERY OF INFERNAL MACHINES	20
A BREACH OF TRUST	28
"DIRTY" WORK	36
"FINE ART"	46
A DIAMOND ROBBERY	55
A PECULIAR CLUE	64
THE STORY OF A MOLE	75
"MISSING"	86
THE CAREER OF A FRENCH YOUTH	94
A MURDER AND A SEQUEL	104
A DOMESTIC TRAGEDY	114
A MYSTERY	123
A SHARP TRICK	133
AN INTERCEPTED ORDER: A FENIAN EPISODE	143
UNDER SUSPICION	154
DEALING IN DECORATIONS	163
AN ARISTOCRATIC WRONGDOER	173
TWICE TAKEN	183
A RUSSIAN ROUBLE NOTE FORGERY	201
A CONTINENTAL TOUR	227

STORIES

FROM

SCOTLAND YARD.

“ON MORTGAGE.”

THERE is a form of swindling—an example I give here—which is carried on to a very considerable extent in London; in fact, among certain perverted classes it has become quite a recognised form of “business.”

It requires two persons to carry out the trade effectively, *i.e.*, a blackguardly solicitor who just manages somehow or other, in spite of his sharp practice and wrongdoing, to keep his name on the Law List, and a thoroughly unscrupulous surveyor, who has no reputation whatever (unless it be a very bad one) to lose. These two work in partnership, and spread their unworthy nets to catch the host of unsuspecting “gudgeons” who manage to get within their meshes.

My readers will perhaps have noticed at some time or other (in fact, they have only to look into the advertisement

columns of almost any of our daily papers at any time, when they will find the announcements I am alluding to) advertisements something like the following :—

A solicitor wishes to find mortgage securities for sums of from £500 to £5,000, at from 3 to $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. interest.—Address, Trustee, care of Pinchem Sharp & Co., 759, Brokenhouse Buildings, E.C.

The advertisement surely is innocent and straightforward enough, and this is precisely what everybody thinks—until they have tried it.

Any one who knows anything at all about mortgage securities—and I am speaking now of really *bond fide* securities—freehold or leasehold, allowing the usual margin for depreciation—will endorse my statement when I say that there is no security, take it altogether, so favourably looked upon by those who have money to invest, as there is generally a fair percentage obtained for the advance, and if properly carried through by a thoroughly qualified solicitor and an honest surveyor, the investment almost invariably proves a safe and reliable one ; therefore, knowing these things, there ought not to be the slightest difficulty whatsoever in obtaining a charge upon property of the above description direct from almost any Bank, Insurance, Trust Company, solicitor, or private individual. I mention these facts in order to warn all those who may at any time have to place their property under an embargo to fight shy of these “advertising” people, who in nineteen cases out of twenty are a set of rapacious vagabonds, who make it their duty and study to deceive the weak-minded,

and thus manage to thrive and grow fat on the inexperience of the poor victims whom they professionally dub their "clients."

The swindle works this way. Probably some "puir fool" of a tradesman, generally an unsuspecting provincial, has seen the advertisement in his local paper—for these rascals advertise very freely—and requiring perhaps a few hundred pounds for the purpose of extending his business in some way, and not wanting to trench upon his working capital, thinks he had better obtain a mortgage upon, I will say, a freehold house, which he may have purchased a few years back, when money was more flush. He writes to the address given, stating his requirements, with probably a fairly full description of the property he proposes to mortgage. To this he would receive a reply as follows:—

759, BROKENHOUSE BUILDINGS, E.C.

Re MORTGAGE.

DEAR SIR,—In reply to your favour of yesterday's date, requesting the advance of £750 upon the freehold property situate at 21, Furze Road, Little Puddington, we beg to say that the security offered appears to us to be a desirable one, and if you will kindly let us know whether this, or what, is the lowest amount you would feel disposed to accept by way of mortgage, we will place the matter before our client at once.

Yours truly,

PINCHEM SHARP & Co.,

Per O. K.

MR. V. S. JUGGINSON,

Grocer,

Little Puddington.

Mr. Jugginson, who is, perhaps, really an honest hard-

working fellow, looks into matters, and although he finds he paid over £1,200 for his house, finally decides that he *can* do with £500 for his present requirements, which would leave margin enough for a second charge should this be necessary. Therefore, he writes a very ungrammatical, but, at the same time, straightforward letter, stating the amount which he, on second consideration, feels disposed to accept. An acknowledgment of this is made by Pinchem Sharp & Co., who mention that they are placing the whole matter before their "client."

In the course of ten days, which the "client" would necessarily take up in going into the matter with his solicitors, a third note is despatched to the patient and smiling grocer, worded like this:—

759, BROKENHOUSE BUILDINGS, E.C.

Re FURZE ROAD PROPERTY.

DEAR SIR,—Our client agrees to advance £500 upon this property, providing the valuation by an independent valuer proves satisfactory, and he suggests that Messrs. D. T. Tapechane & Co., of 1114, Queen Elizabeth Street, E.C., be entrusted with the duty, for which purpose we shall require twenty guineas (Messrs. Tapechane's fee is payable in advance), together with £3 15s. 10d. second class return railway fare, &c. Awaiting your reply,

Yours truly,

Mr. V S. JUGGINSON.

PINCHEM SHARP & Co.

When Mr. Jugginson received this communication he would hum and haw and fidget about it; but, not caring about consulting with any of his neighbours on the matter—for Pudlington is a small place, and we all well know

what such places are as regards gossip—he would write out a cheque for the amount and send it on by return of post, when its receipt would be duly acknowledged, and in the course of a few days a young man, about 30, with a considerable amount of watch-guard and manner—being no other than Mr. Tapechane, the surveyor, who had travelled *third-class*—would present himself at Mr. Jugginson's shop in the market square, make known his business to that gentleman, and together the two would proceed to the property, the former to "value," and the latter to point out the extremely desirable features and situation of the house, and so forth, all of which Mr. Tapechane would be careful to note. This having taken up some hours, the pair would lunch at Jugginson's shop, Mr. Tapechane being introduced to Mrs. and the Misses Jugginson, and so on, and a bottle of "Filbey's" fourteenpenny full-bodied and highly-crusted port (as per advertisement, and for which Jugginson was sole agent for the district) would be taken out of stock and "cracked" on the strength of the hope of the mortgage being carried through. That same night Mr. Jugginson would dream of the new shop front and fixtures the £500 would furnish, and how glum his rival over the way would look when he had them, and so on.

In the lapse of a few days Mr. Jugginson would receive another letter from the lawyer :—

759, BROKENHOUSE BUILDINGS, E.C.

Re FURZE ROAD.

DEAR SIR,—We regret to inform you that our client, upon the report furnished by Messrs. Tapechane & Co., declines to advance £500 or any sum upon the security offered.

Yours truly,

Mr. V. S. JUGGINSON.

PINCHEM SHARP & Co.

He in consequence, saw his dreams vanish into thin air, and himself minus nearly twenty-five pounds. and not a bit nearer negotiations than when they were commenced quite a month ago. He would write (his anger being roused), or cause a local solicitor (whom he ought to have consulted in the first instance) to write, demanding a copy of the valuation to be furnished, which would be sent upon the payment of another guinea to Tapechane, and when procured would prove one of the vaguest documents ever concocted, which, whilst not saying anything absolutely against the property, would be so feeble in its appreciation of it that the veriest tyro of an investor would decline to advance even a sixpence on the strength of it. Pinchem Sharp & Co. would be written indignantly to, but a mild protesting reply would only be forthcoming, stating that “they regretted the valuation was unfavourable, and that they would submit it to another client they had, who, however, in any case, would also naturally prefer to choose *his* own valuer,” and thus only increase expense if the security was again declined. Then, perhaps, a doubt would be expressed by Jugginson’s solicitor that Pinchem Sharp & Co. really

had any "client" at all in the matter. This would only produce a very indignant reply, winding up with the statement that "Messrs. Pinchem Sharp & Co. most absolutely refused to discuss the matter any further with either Mr. Jugginson or his solicitor, owing to the very personal hostile manner which Mr. Jugginson assumed." This was all the satisfaction Jugginson got, finding himself very much worried, out of temper, and a loser of some thirty guineas in all, when the extra guinea, the local solicitor, and a fresh surveyor, employed by Jugginson himself—who almost began to think that he had been done in giving £1,200 for the house—had been paid. Not only this, but by the fact of the security having been declined, it was deteriorated in its marketable value, for many solicitors would very naturally hesitate to advance the full value, less margin, upon property which they ought on enquiry learn had been refused elsewhere, and make this fact their reason either for a decreased amount being offered or an extra percentage being demanded.

Be it known that Messrs. Pinchem Sharp & Co., Messrs. Tapechane & Co., and the "client" all worked this little "rig" together, dividing the spoil equally among themselves, and, what is more, they are still carrying on this sort of business, and will continue to carry it on as long as there are sheep like Jugginson in existence to fleece, and it is a very difficult matter indeed to get these slippery customers prosecuted, for when the case comes on for hearing—that is, if aggressive measures get so far advanced—they have every-

thing arranged to show their apparent straightforwardness. The solicitor, who is on the Law List, deposes that on the surveyor's report he did not feel disposed to advise his client, who is generally an individual prepared to swear at any time that he instructed the solicitor to find and look into the security, letters being produced to this effect; and the surveyor, of course, states "his opinion, based upon a long professional experience," that the property is not such as he would recommend, and thus three witnesses as against one invariably secures the prompt dismissal of the defendants, and is a case in which the magistrate, in his crass ignorance of the true state of affairs, generally states "ought never to have been brought," &c.

How do I know that all this is done? Well, I will try and tell you.

A complaint was made to the "Yard" by a smart, wide-awake, good-looking, gentlemanly young fellow one day, that he had, as he expressed himself, although knowing not a little of the world, been properly "done" to the extent of not merely thirty guineas, but out of about £150, and as he was very well off, only requiring the temporary mortgage of £1,000 on an estate of his, worth at least £15,000, for which he had, in a weak moment, applied to Pinchem Sharp & Co., in order to enable him to discharge some pressing debt or other, he declared that he would "tackle" that notorious firm if it cost him all his belongings; and he meant it. You could see that, as his big brown eyes flashed mischief.

I was very much struck with the young man. He was an officer in the Guards, quite six feet in height, as lithe as a lance, an awkward man to tackle, for although apparently quite collected and subdued in appearance, there was just a faint quiver in the corner of his mouth that spoke volumes of the spirit within. He was, in a word, just the sort of man who unobtrusively packs up his "traps," joins his company, goes warwards, and comes home, after being mentioned in every despatch.

Well, after very considerable trouble I managed to secure all the information I have given here concerning Pinchem Sharp & Co.'s doings; but in spite of a very energetic solicitor, and all the efforts of the young Guardsman, who worked like a nigger in the case, sparing neither time nor expense, the charge was dismissed by the "bench," who expressed itself of the opinion that not sufficient evidence to show fraud had been forthcoming, and our hero had the mortification of seeing the guilty trio leave the court unpunished. Pinchem Sharp, who was defended by a 'cute counsel who makes his living by taking up all the dirty cases of this kind, with a sneer remarking just sufficiently loud for the prosecutor to hear, "That he hoped Captain Cameron was now satisfied." Cameron responded with a very mischievous look out of the corners of his eyes, which I translated into meaning, "I haven't done with you yet, my fine fellow, I can tell you."

"Well, Mr. Moser," said the captain when we got outside the court, "I am very much obliged to you for the trouble

you have taken in verifying my opinion of those rascals. Good day." And without any further remark he lighted a cigar and marched away. I could not help turning round and watching with admiration his splendid physique. The next morning I received by post a pretty little pocket-book, with my name engraved on the clasp, and in it was a ten-pound note.

The following week I was engaged in some work in the City, and I thereupon took the opportunity of calling upon the commissionaire who was caretaker of the block in which Pinchem Sharp's offices were situated, to hand him a sovereign, as he had given me a lot of information respecting the "firm" and their movements, help which I thought wise to cherish, in case of futurities, by giving him a *douceur*.

"Hullo, Mr. Moser!" remarked the commissionaire when he recognised me, "you should have been here last Thursday afternoon about three o'clock."

"Why?"

"There *was* some fun going on in 759, I can tell you."

"How? What do you mean?"

"Well, I was sitting in my box in the hall, as usual, when a tall, well set-up gentleman, who I could see was a "military," came up to me and said, 'Sergeant, will you show me Pinchem Sharp & Co.'s office?' which I did. He thereupon opens the door without knocking, which I thought was rather funny, and when he gets inside he fastens the door and turns the key, which was funnier still. Then I

heard such a tumbling and a knocking about, and a 'Take this, you scoundrel!' 'Take that, you blackguard!' and 'Take the other thing, you reptile!' and a whole lot to the same effect. The tumbling over of the chairs and tables was awful—being more like a circus than an office—and this went on for about twenty minutes or so. Then, when all seemed quiet, out comes my military gentleman, looking very hot, but very pleased, tucking up his cuffs as if nothing whatever in the world had happened, and saying, as he caught sight of me :

" 'Here sergeant, here's half-a-crown for you,' strokes his big moustache, and quietly walks out into the street. About an hour afterwards, three gents came out of the office, and I nearly went into fits when I saw them, for they were tied up with handkerchiefs and all sorts of things. One had his coat torn, and they all looked so white and so sick that I began to think that we must have a hospital outpatient ward in the building somewhere. What is the rummiest part of it is, that none of 'em have been near the place since, and the office boy has orders to tell all callers that Pinchem Sharp & Co. have gone out of town for a fortnight."

From this I gathered that the captain had been "interviewing" the firm on his own account.

Poor Cameron was killed shortly afterwards in the Soudan.

A DISCOVERY OF INFERNAL MACHINES.

ONE of the most interesting and important "cases" that I was ever engaged in, considering the excitement, conditions, and circumstances of the time, was one the investigation of which was entrusted to me some few years ago in no less important a place than Liverpool.

When I say interesting, I, of course, mean from a detective's point of view, and when I call it important, I do so because I am confident that nothing could have been more so looking at it in almost any light.

The members of the detective force of Scotland Yard had at the time an unusual amount of hard and tedious work thrown upon them, in an almost wholesale manner, by the sudden irruption of the Fenian element, with all its corollary of horrors to this country generally, and to London in particular. If I state that every possible resource at the disposal of the Criminal Investigation Department was taxed to its very uttermost, I am putting, even then, the matter very mildly indeed.

My readers themselves will remember, without my having

to recapitulate them, the loathsome, hateful details of the proceedings of the cowardly blackguards who for a short but terrible period, by their ghastly horrible plots and deeds, caused almost a panic amongst us, and it will not be necessary for me to re-picture the intense amount of excitement and indignation these untoward acts caused; suffice it, that the whole of the United Kingdom was wrung to the very vitals by the doings of these hireling dastards, who, in spite of all precautions and careful watching, managed in some way or other in many instances to make good their escape.

I have often thought that a kind of special providence appeared to watch over this island at that time during its troubles, for we have only to remember the destructive attempts made and the several atrocities at Whitehall, the Houses of Parliament, the Tower, and the Mansion House, and elsewhere, to note with something more than thankfulness the almost entirely abortive results attending the machinations of the perpetrators, who had expected a far larger measure of success as a reward for their villainy.

Thanks to the beneficent courage and intelligence of a large number of "informers" in touch with the authorities here, and the still further stimulated energies of the police, those who were known to be in any way connected with these foul deeds, whether they resided in England, on the continent, or in America, were treated with such "careful attention" that further attempts became almost impossible. Scotland Yard, when it recovered itself from its first fright, soon

was placed in possession of a vast amount of useful information concerning the doings of many of these bands of miscreants.

One day the "Yard" received intelligence from one of its American "informers"—"spies" some people contemptuously but wrongly call them—that a very suspicious cargo, or rather a cargo from some very suspicious people, had been consigned to Liverpool, and that it would be just as well to look into matters there and be ready to act if required promptly. I need, perhaps, hardly mention that the cargo was suspected to consist in some part of dynamite or explosive materials of the kind.

To Liverpool I was despatched, and making up my mind to spend some time there if required, set to work and commenced inquiries at the various wharves and quays on both sides of the Mersey, not by any means a light task, as one may be sure, particularly as the length of the docks on the Liverpool and Cheshire side made a considerable hole into twenty miles. It was in the spring, and bitterly cold; in consequence, my duties were rather impeded than otherwise.

After about a fortnight's looking around me into almost every nook and corner within reach, and where I thought a vessel of any size or shape could be concealed, I began, as it were, to "feel my way," and got to know from the various officials and others many of the little games and tricks of the trade that often go on between consignors and consignees, and very interesting some of them were.

Another week put me into the possession of the whereabouts of large quantities of cargo lying in different parts of the docks, awaiting claiming by the consignees, and to these in particular I devoted my attention, with the hope that something of a suspicious nature might turn up amongst them. It was a sickening, weary task this, going in and out of the different warehouses, looking over, almost casually, of course, thousands of tons of goods of every possible description, making careful notes of anything unusual, and keenly watching the hundreds of individuals who thronged this great and busy hive from morning until night, sometimes perching myself in an uncomfortable position for hours together on the top of a pile of goods for the purpose of making my observations without being seen, with oftentimes nothing but a few biscuits and a friendly pipe.

Coming one morning, for the fourth time during the three weeks in which I had already been busy at work, across quite a little mountain of casks of cement, carefully piled up on their sides in layers, I turned to the man in charge of the warehouse, and remarked, "Whose are these?"

"I don't know, I'm sure ; they've been here ten days. I'll go and look at my books."

When he returned he gave me the address of the consignees, a firm in Hackins Hey, and as I had to make a visit in that direction on other business sometime or other, I thought that for a little change I would devote the afternoon to it. So at lunch time I knocked off.

"Rogerson and Bolder," 573, Hackins Hey, seemed to

have souls entirely above sign-boards, for at that address there was not the slightest notice that such a firm existed, and had I not ferreted out the caretaker and asked him the question, I should have had to go away without any information whatsoever, for none of the other people on the premises could give me any particulars.

The caretaker told me that a man named Bolder had been and "took" the offices right up at the top of the stairs for a month, and had paid a sovereign for the accommodation, saying that he or his partner, a Mr. Rogerson, would call there every few days, and if any letters arrived would he, the caretaker, keep them and hand them over to one or the other when asked for them, to which he agreed.

At the time I did not think much of this circumstance, but merely thanked the caretaker, came away, transacted my other business, and returned to the docks.

By that time, it was seven o'clock. Therefore, arming myself with a lantern, I sallied forth, determined to make a thorough examination of the casks. They appeared all right enough, and apparently contained what they were represented to, *i.e.*, cement. The word "Boston" was roughly painted on each cask in black, but on eight of them, only I noticed that the letter "t" was crossed, and I should not have made the discovery had I not held the lantern up to the level of my head when the light, falling upon the end of one of the casks, revealed the fact to me. I said nothing beyond telling the man in charge, who, of course, I had informed whom I was, or he would not have permitted me

so much freedom about the place, not to let the casks, some seventy or so altogether, be taken away without letting me know. This he promised to do, and I left the suspected shipment until the next day.

Early the following morning I obtained such additional help as I thought I might require, and had the whole lot opened one by one and their contents emptied out. In each of the casks marked with the crossed "t" was a fully-charged infernal machine, fitted with the usual clockwork apparatus, provided with an eleven ounce cartridge of dynamite, quite sufficient to play very considerable havoc wherever it was destined it should be eventually placed. The cement was replaced, the casks fastened up, and put as near as possible in their original position, and a strict watch kept over them.

I took the infernal machines to the nearest police station, had a second watch placed upon the Hackins Hey establishment, and telegraphed to Scotland Yard the result of my labours.

Not a little surprise and astonishment was expressed at my "find," and I believe the American contingent especially were considerably "riled" at this thwarting, as we afterwards learned it was one of their great *coups*, for these particular machines were intended, not so much for the destruction of property as for the destroying of life, the object being to forward them to different public individuals, with the hope that some grievous bodily harm might be done. The entrance of the machines themselves to the "Yard" caused

considerable excitement, for a large number of the officials there had never seen such things before, and much speculation took place as to their power and effects if exploded. Several experiments were made by the Government experts, and it was undoubtedly demonstrated that each of the machines was of the latest and most improved construction, and fully capable of carrying out the wishes of the desperadoes in whose hands they might eventually be placed.

Colonel Howard Vincent and Sir William Vernon Harcourt both took a vast interest in them, and I had the honour and privilege of being commissioned to exhibit them to the latter gentleman, and also to many members of the House of Peers, some of whom were not a little "scared" at the probability of success attending the efforts of those making any future consignments.

A continued watch for several weeks took place, both at the office in Liverpool and also over the consigned cement, but no one seemed to trouble about it, for to this day the seventy casks have never been claimed, neither was anything done with the firm of "Rogerson & Bolder," who must in some way or other have got "wind" of the exact state of affairs, and cleared out precipitately, or have been recalled by the consignors to America.

It may not be out of place here to offer a few words to those ruffians who, for some strange and unaccountable reason or other, imagine that it is their province to defy the laws and do their utmost to damage authority. I would tell

the vagabonds plainly, and as emphatically as I possibly can, that if they wish to remain unchanged, if they wish to live in peace, they had better keep quiet, for the English Government is now so thoroughly awake as to their movements, and so well informed as to their whereabouts, and so determined, even at the risk of a temporary international disturbance, to bring them to justice when occasion demands it, that the game is not worth the candle, the chances of secrecy and non-detection being completely played out.

The leaders of these and other like nefarious enterprises have been under the closest scrutiny for some years past, and their every movement is almost as familiar to Scotland Yard as to themselves, and not all the disguises, all the subterfuges, at the command of these almost outlawed persons will enable them to carry out effectively any of their plans, which are certain—as certain as I pen this article—to be frustrated by the activity of the police.

I have not supplied much information respecting the precise movements of “Scotland Yard” in regard to this particular case, because by so doing I should only, perhaps, be playing into the very hands of the persons whom it is the earnest desire of every right-thinking man or woman to defeat—people who are so intimately responsible for the most deplorable conditions which have ever surrounded the schemes—by some deemed to be necessary to carry on what is supposed to be “political” warfare.

A BREACH OF TRUST.

IT was weary work, indeed, for Inspector Conquest and I had been for nearly two months trying to find the whereabouts of a defaulting solicitor, a man very well known in Paris, enjoying a large practice there, chiefly among the English residents of that gay and festive city, an individual who spoke English fluently and knew London well.

It was the old, old story, told here once more in a very few words, for it has been told so often before and at length by abler pens than mine.

"Solicitors' extravagant living," "Clients' implicit faith," "Wrongful use of trust moneys," "Sudden disappearance," &c., &c., &c., not a bit different to the hundreds of cases bringing unutterable ruin upon large numbers of people which take place in this country, and which a preoccupied Legislature cannot possibly see (although they are constantly being brought to its notice by the daily papers) is easily to be remedied.

In this instance, 400,000 francs had gone in betting, high living, and the temptations of the maintenance of a so-called "position." Proud, empty title, how ridiculous thou art, even when attained ; position ! to the detriment of one's moral fibre ; position ! the source of a restless, unsatis-

factory ambition ; position ! to the destruction of friendship ; position ! the enjoyment of life's brief five minutes of it, to be attained only by criminal acts necessitating the setting of the dogs of law upon its trail ; position ! never a blessing, often a curse.

He was a middle-aged man, with all the prospects of a long and successful career before him, when Scotland Yard was made acquainted with the particulars of his flight and his probable escape to this country.

We had been, as I say, about two months seeking him, and almost despairing of success.

We had found his wife, an exceedingly clever English-woman, well connected, and moving in the best society of London.

She had preceded her husband's visit here, and knowing thoroughly the consequences if he should happen to be discovered, took every pains to hide his whereabouts, and very successful she was in her endeavours. She and her five children were watched very narrowly, so much so, that I am afraid the "shadowing" was a little overdone, and in that way her precautions considerably increased.

One of them was to always have a female companion with her, someone who evidently enjoyed her confidence ; and whenever she walked out, paid visits, or transacted business of any description, there surely was to be seen with her the ubiquitous companion, and to note their conjoint manœuvres was not by any means uninteresting. For instance, on leaving the house the lady herself would walk rapidly on for about

twenty yards, then suddenly turn round and retrace her steps towards her companion, whom she had left behind. Looking round about very quickly, they would then walk to some cab-stand, take a hansom, and give the driver instructions to turn round at once, if he perceived another cab following his, and drive them home to Mayfair, where the lady resided with some relatives. As the defaulting solicitor was well known to have "married well," and feeling on every possible occasion at every Parisian social function that he attended that it was to his interest to make the fact known to as many present as he was able, it soon became spread about that madame was the cousin of the third daughter of a courtesy English lord or something of that kind, and the pair were looked up to by Parisian society accordingly. As the address of the third daughter of the courtesy lord was well known, we had no difficulty whatsoever in finding out madame's whereabouts when she came over.

Her mysterious conduct, and her movements generally, caused us to be very suspicious; in fact, she displayed a little too much caution, and by this made us more than doubly certain that she was in the "know" of the whereabouts of her husband. Still, with all our weeks of careful watching we got no nearer the object of our search, so cleverly did the wife manage her interviews with him. We were confident she had seen him, and frequently, but where we could not discover, nor could we manage in any way to intercept the many telegrams and letters which arrived;

everything, as I say, was so smartly done that we were absolutely defeated on all sides. But we remained only the more convinced that the husband was within easy reach somewhere.

So well did this lady carry out her plans that she always took a circuitous route whenever she wished to pay a visit to any particular place. Supposing, as another instance, she wanted to visit, say Regent Street. An open carriage would be hired, and she would leave the house in South Audley Street, and be driven all the way round by Hampstead, dismiss her carriage, finish her shopping, then, always of course with the indispensable companion, engage a hansom and drive home by crossing over to the Surrey side of the river, recrossing at Chelsea, and viâ that way to Mayfair again. The object of all this was undoubtedly to tire out those whom she fancied and knew were watching her, and I may say here that she succeeded admirably, for, after about a fortnight of this sort of game, which played the very deuce with the detectives' time, tempers, and pockets, we came to the conclusion that the case would be none the worse for a little "rest," which we duly gave it, breathing a sigh of thankfulness for the temporary suspension of our most arduous duties.

About a fortnight after this I was passing through the Strand in a hansom, going to Chancery Lane, when we came to a "block" in the vehicular traffic at Wellington Street, not by any means an unusual thing at that particular spot. Rather than wait, perhaps, a quarter of an hour or so, for

we were a longish way behind, I got out, dismissed the cab, crossed over to the other side of the road, determined to finish my journey on foot, when who should I see waiting on the "island" at the end of Wellington Street but our lady friend and her companion. I immediately beat a retreat, and hid myself among the vehicles in the road until they had crossed over and passed by me. I then followed them all the way down the Strand and into Charing Cross Station. I pressed a porter into my service, gave him half-a-crown, pointed out the ladies to him, and told him to get near to the booking-office and obtain for me the name of the place they were going to. In a moment or two he came back and said, "Catford, sir; two first returns."

I thought the matter over for a little while, for my first impulse was to follow the ladies. But, however, I turned on my heel, left the station, and went to transact the business which had thus been temporarily suspended.

The next day I ran down to Catford, to see what was going on there, making many inquiries of many people at many places. I managed to learn that in a house called "The Park," a rather foreign and distingué-looking gentleman was staying with a friend, and he had been there for some weeks past, the residents in the neighbourhood having learned in some mysterious and unfathomable manner or other that this said gentleman was a French nobleman. He drove out a good deal, and spent his money freely in the village. This was getting interesting, and for the next few days, with the assistance of the local police, I carefully watched the

movements of the "nobleman," arriving at the very cheerful and satisfactory conclusion that he was no other than the individual that Inspector Conquest and I had so diligently displayed our united interests in ; and, what was more, I determined to arrest him.

So the next morning, about five o'clock (it was very cruel to disturb anyone at this unearthly hour, I know, but my reason was that I wanted to get him away quietly and before the people in the district got about), two cabs, full of policemen, drove up to the house, and a very pretty place it was, indeed.

I remember the morning well ; being the middle of June, the weather was simply glorious, and we all entered into the fun of the thing with great glee.

Placing the police officers carefully round the house to prevent the escape of our "man," I rang the front door bell. After a while a nervous, trembling, little French housemaid answered the ring and opened the door. She was somewhat alarmed, and when she caught sight of the "bobby" at my elbow, she immediately slammed the door in my face, and ran in, frightened. Well, I had another ring, and another, and another ; no one came. I therefore went round to the back of the house, got over the wall, and into the yard, and knocked at the door there, which was presently opened by an elderly gentleman, who, in his partly-dressed condition, I mistook for my suspect ; so promptly seizing him by the collar of his dressing-coat I said, "I arrest you, Francois Caistowe."

“No, no, no ; not me ; I am not Caistowe. I am the butler,” said the old man, getting very pale. “Monsieur Caistowe’s room is there,” pointing to a room on the right of the passage (by this time we had reached the entrance portion of the house), at which I demanded admission, and, what is more, succeeded in obtaining it.

It was a very nicely furnished room, but the bed was placed right in the middle of the floor ; there was no bedstead, simply a mattress and bedding.

In less than a moment Caistowe pulled out from under the pillow a pistol, at the sight of which I could hardly help smiling, dangerous as the prospect might appear. It was an enormous size, and bore evidence of having been manufactured in the good old days of blunderbusses. The fact of the matter was that Caistowe himself appeared not a little frightened at the cumbersome implement, and in a very nervous manner he half intimated that he should use it if necessary and if I attempted to touch him.

Somehow I didn’t feel very disturbed about it, and I told him plainly that I was afraid he would get much the worst of it if it came to a mere physical struggle, and to this statement the old butler added :

“Yes ; give yourself up, for I know there are a lot of policeman round the house, as I saw some of them out of the bedroom window before I ventured downstairs.”

I therefore took the pistol (it was unresistingly yielded) out of Caistowe’s hands, and ordered him to get dressed and accompany me. He did do so, but it was a tedious

job, for he suffered severely with varicose veins, and had to go through a long performance of carefully bandaging his legs up before he would entrust himself into my hands.

During this time I carefully examined the pistol. It wasn't loaded, and if it had been, the individual firing it would have been considerably the sufferer, for a more broken-down looking arrangement I never in my life saw.

I took Caistowe in one of the cabs to Bow Street, and in due time he was extradited to France, tried there, and sentenced to a long term of imprisonment. It was a flagrant case, as every cent of the 400,000fr. had been spent by him in the manner suggested in the opening of the story.

His wife and children remained in England until his sentence had expired; they then rejoined him on the continent, but his health gave way owing to the incarceration he had suffered, and he died shortly afterwards, and I believe his wife, at a great sacrifice to herself, has since repaid every farthing of the misapplied funds, preferring in this manner to remove the stigma which would have remained upon the "growing up" family.

“ DIRTY ” WORK.



THERE is a certain almost too well-known portion of the Strand which has for a large number of years held a very unenviable notoriety, and it is the earnest wish and hope of all those who are interested in the welfare of youths in particular and morality in general that the contemplated improvements of that district will be of such a radical character as to sweep away altogether the foul sink of iniquity to which I allude, and which is known by the name of Holywell Street.

I know that the subject I am touching upon is of a delicate nature, and I know also that many well-meaning people will think and say, “You are stirring up mud and matters which had far better be left alone ;” but with this sentiment, however, I cannot agree, for I know nothing so efficacious in the allaying of physical putrefaction in any shape or form than the letting in of plenty of fresh air and daylight, and I am sure that the same treatment will apply to the moral corruption which has existed, and still exists, in the unsavoury locality just mentioned. Give these places, I maintain, all the publicity—frequent and strong—which an independent, an enlightened, and a high-minded press

can give, and you then possess one of the strongest factors of improvement and repression possible. There is nothing that the wretches who pander to youthful morbid fancies and elderly lustful tastes detest and fear more than an occasional "look in" upon and exposure of their infamous doings. That there are in that particular street many respectable tradespeople, is not denied, although it is greatly to be deplored that they do not possess more wholesome-minded neighbours, and I sympathise with these men fully and truly that they should be compelled to carry on their business surrounded by so much that is degrading and loathsome.

It may be asked, perhaps, with a certain amount of reason, why do I take upon myself the responsibility of making use of these expressions? I can only say this in reply, that I have seen in my varied experiences so very much harm resulting in so very many instances through the spreading abroad of the pernicious literature and pictures which form the staple produce of the blackguard purveyors of Holywell Street, that if I did not use every endeavour in my power, direct and indirect, to suppress such, I should consider myself as totally unworthy of respect, as I myself consider those to be who, by their indifference or carelessness, are heedless of the dire consequences accruing from a nefarious trade of this description.

But it may still further be asked (and I have already had the question put to me), are you not injuring your own business by exposing matters of this kind? To this I reply

emphatically, "No." The few cases of wrongdoing which I am able to give the details of, cannot possibly have even the slightest influence upon the prospect of any one's success, for—and I regret to say it—the world is so full of knavery, trickery, dishonesty, and evil-doing generally, that if the whole detective forces were increased to ten times their present number, there would still be plenty, and more than plenty, for them to do. The fools of this world want quite as much, if not more, looking after than the rogues, for but for the indiscretions of the former the latter would have a very hard time of it; and as for fools—well, you know what Carlyle said about them.

I have been lead up to this somewhat lengthy introduction—which I hope my readers will pardon—because the gentleman who has so patiently chronicled the revelations I have poured into his ears, objected to treat of this unpleasant subject unless I could show him its absolute necessity. I trust I have done so, though I must confess that, had it not been for the fact that a few weeks ago I was looking through a particular note-book which contains the entries of all my experiences of the Holywell Street kind, and in which I found a "case" not too hideous in its details to prevent its publication, I should not, perhaps, have ventured upon the topic at all.

I must say this, however, before I enter upon the recapitulation of the facts which I am about to present to my readers, that in the scores of cases of this kind in which I

have been engaged or interested I have never found—be it to his everlasting credit—an *Englishman* engaged in this abominable traffic, for it has always been—in the range of my own experience of course—some outcast member of some foreign country or other. Englishmen *may* be engaged in the trade, but if they are I am not personally aware of it; it is invariably the half-bred scoundrel with a “history,” who, finding his own stronghold in his native slums too hot for him, comes over here to this country, escaping the justice of his own, and who, by way of gratitude for the clemency the freedom of Great Britain gives him, must needs take in hand the corruption of the morals of the young of our schools and homes.

The way these beings generally work is this:—They purchase a small printing plant and a photographic apparatus, and in the quiet of their own shop or premises secretly print off circulars and photographs; they then manage, through some means or another, perhaps, as I have found it, with the aid of an underling of the establishment, to secure the names of a number of the pupils of our public and private schools, and to these are cautiously and from time to time addressed the circulars under the title of “art studies.” The more precocious recipients, perhaps, respond and purchase some of the indecent pictures, and thus do an almost incalculable amount of mischief to the morality of their schoolfellows.

This goes on unknown, of course, to the master, until, perhaps, he accidentally makes a discovery of a number in

the possession of one the boys ; but what can he do, or, rather, what does he do? He burns the vicious rubbish and punishes the boy, but in most instances fears to institute a prosecution against the real offender, because of the unpleasant publicity his establishment will attain in consequence, and the hideous villain who ought to be taken and nailed by the ears to the nearest gatepost, is permitted to go almost unmolested, and carries on his game with perfect impunity. This traffic applies to scholastic and educational establishments for boys as well as girls, and the mischief and misery it brings forth are incredible. Sometimes, however, these wretches catch a Tartar ; then society is relieved of their loathsome presence for a time, for our judges, I am glad to say, recognise the heinousness of offences of this kind at their true value, and mete out sentences accordingly.

In 1881 an elderly gentleman, the master of one of our private schools, came to Scotland Yard in a state of great distress, for he had discovered in one of the boy's desks a large bundle of indecent prints, and wanted, if he could possibly do it without publicity, to find out the wretch who had sent them and have him severely punished. I shall never forget the old man's indignation—he was a splendid fellow, idolised by every one who knew him, his pupils looking upon him more in the light of a father than as a master, and, in consequence, at that school a high tone prevailed throughout. The master had not been able to find any circulars or printed matter of any kind, was at an

entire loss as to who was the vendor, and had no idea whatever as to his whereabouts. He had not cross-examined or even spoken to the boy about the photographs, preferring to simply take them away and hand them over to the police to deal with.

The matter was placed in my hands, and I was given the prints to see if I could trace the dealer. This was a very difficult matter, for there is a great sameness about these things, and perhaps at least a hundred shops in London are at present dealing in exactly the same sort of goods, the originals or negatives of which are invariably imported from abroad. I therefore made a careful survey of all the localities—and there are many where these things are sold—and after a few days saw in a shop window in Holywell-street an exact copy of one of the minor photos in my possession. I made a note of the place, and the next day visited it, having got myself up in a very elaborate manner for the occasion. When I got into the shop I spoke to a seedy, dirty-looking individual behind the counter, and I asked him if he could sell me some photographs, indicating the kind I wanted. He let me have some which were not of so bad a type as those received from the schoolmaster, and handed to me by my superior at the "Yard;" still, I said nothing, but paid for them, and asked him to send them by post to Mr. Johnson, the name I assumed, at a well-known West-end club, which he did, I having previously arranged with the secretary of that institution to receive any letters or parcels which might arrive so addressed. At my leisure I compared

them with those in my possession, and there was no doubt whatever in my mind as to the workmanship being by the same hand and process. The next day I bought a few more, and so on every day for nearly a week ; then, as I thought, having disarmed any suspicion which might arise, I preferred a request to purchase some other photos of a more improper character, so on the sixth day I boldly asked for what I had really intended trying to secure at the first, and the man was proceeding, on the strength of our short acquaintance, to deal with me confidentially and let me have what I wanted, when, out of an inner room, his wife, a woman equally seedy, equally dirty, with a child at her breast which was, if anything, even seedier and dirtier than either or both the father and mother, suddenly appeared and screamed out, "Don't sell him any, dear, you know the trouble you had last time." (The wretch had received six months' imprisonment previously.)

"Oh," said the man, "I think this gentleman means square, don't you, sir?"

"Well," said I, "do I look like an informer?"

"But you might be a detective, sir, which is worse."

To which I replied, "Have I the look of one?"

"No," he said, "I don't think you have."

"However," I said, "don't trouble about it. You know your own business best. I will have some the same as I had before," which I did, and left the shop.

Three or four days afterwards I made another call, and

again repeated my request. The wife once more appeared on the scene to protest.

At last, after considerable conversation, I prevailed upon the man to let me have some of his more valuable wares, and followed him upstairs into a dirty little place, which was part bed-room, part workshop, part store-room, part anything—as filthy a hole as I have ever been into. I sat on a rickety chair before an equally rickety table, my face looking towards the window, whilst the man was picking out the photographs from a tin box he had pulled out from under the bed, and placing them on the table, his wife watching the proceedings over my shoulder.

After a little time, just as I had selected about half-a-dozen of his "choicest" specimens, the woman shouted out, "I can see you are a detective by the looks you gave those photographs," and entreated her husband not to let me take them away on any consideration whatsoever.

"Well," said I, "you're a funny woman."

"Yes," responded the husband. "Ever since I was 'lagged' before, the missus is always suspicious when I have a deal in these things; but I think I can trust you, sir. You don't look one of the spying sort. You are genuine, ain't you, sir?" he said pleadingly.

"Take your money," said I, appearing indignant, and handing him two sovereigns—a profitable trade this, though risky. He hesitated, got very white, trembled, and said in a choking sort of a voice, "Well, don't split on me, governor, but I'll believe you a thoroughly good one if you will only

kiss the baby ; for you *must* be a bad lot if you can do that and then turn round on me."

When I looked at the baby—a poor, wizened, sniffing, little bleared-eyed mortal, possessing an odour like a last month's feeding-bottle, a dirty little mite, which had apparently never had a glimpse of sunlight, except what it could catch through the dirty window-panes, upon its face, and who had to all appearances never known the luxury of a supply of fresh water and a clean towel, and I was asked and expected to kiss it as part of the proof of my bona fides, I could hardly contain myself for amusement, not by any means unmixed with disgust ; but, however, I got out of the difficulty of the unpleasant situation by giving the little wretched piece of forlorn humanity a shilling, and, touching its wan cheeks with my glove, I came away with the photographs amid the loudly-expressed doubts of the wife, who, I noticed, followed me out of the shop, and through the Strand, until I reached Charing Cross Station, from where I made a short railway journey for the sole purpose of getting rid of her.

There is nothing more to be said beyond that, with the assistance of half-a-dozen policemen, I next day made a "raid" (the newspapers of that date will give all particulars) upon the premises, and seized the stock-in-trade, consisting of over 5,000 photographs, &c. The judge sentenced the culprit to the full penalty of two years' imprisonment, regretting that he could not give him the cat in addition, for it *was* he who had sent the photographs to the school.

I was complimented upon my efforts, and although I had to practise a certain amount of deceit in making the "catch," my conscience acquits me of the responsibility of any real duplicity, as I was the means of bringing the blackguard to book at last, putting, I hope, an end to a revolting trade which he had fairly successfully carried on for more than a dozen years.

“ FINE ART ”

THERE are so many various ways nowadays of “raising the wind” that one is hardly surprised to hear of any new plan or scheme which may be invented for the purpose.

There is a very popular little book, called, I believe, “A Thousand Ways to Earn a Living,” which is full of useful, intelligible hints, and of value to those who may require its services.

If Scotland Yard, however, could or would publish its records, officially or otherwise, they would reveal annually a much greater number of methods of picking up an existence than are indicated in the little work just mentioned.

The tricks of the criminal trade are many, increasing with the growth of commerce and population both in numbers and variety, and every little loophole of insecurity or unsafety is taken advantage of by those who specially lay themselves out for a course of dishonesty.

If anyone so disposed had made it his purpose to visit pretty regularly—say three times a week or so—a low sort of a public-house up a narrow street off the Haymarket, at any time between seven o’clock in the evening and closing time, during the whole of eighteen months embraced in the

years 1882 and 1883, he would have seen there an elderly, respectable-looking man named Burton, a native, and for a long time resident, of Newcastle, but who took it into his head to come southwards, owing, as he said, to "family reasons." Some of the Newcastle people seemed to think that the police authorities had something to do with his removal, which was, perhaps, much nearer the exact truth. At all events, he did a fairly prosperous business in London in a very careful manner indeed, in the "negociation" (not "receiving," in the strict sense of the word) of all kinds of "swag"—in short, he was a thieves' commission agent, and so carefully had he played his cards, that, although nearly every detective in the force knew him, and, what is more, had suspected and watched him, he managed in some mysterious way or other to always elude detection. He was a tall, gentlemanly, well-dressed man, and had received a good education; was impressive in his manner, and just the very individual—principles, volubility, and everything considered—one would imagine expressly cut out to occupy the chair of the many bubble companies which he had been successful in "promoting" during his lengthened experience of fictitious finance and human credulity. He could speak well, and he did so often, generally holding forth on matters of a financial character, at the bar of the little public-house mentioned, usually having for his audience a number of fifth-rate foreigners, seedy, and, like himself, absolutely characterless.

One particular evening in August of the former year stated

a strange trio of Frenchmen had met at the house for the purpose of having a business conversation relative to a scheme which they were about embarking upon. The first of these men was an artist of very considerable ability, who had done some very useful work in his time, and might, but for his laziness, have occupied a fair position in the Parisian artistic world. The second was a thorough loafer, a fellow who had never done, nor ever would do, a day's honest hard work in his life ; and the third was the son of a well-known silk merchant at Lisle. The three had joined forces in Paris, when, having spent almost all their money in riotous living in that city, and disgusted their friends and relatives at their dissolute conduct, as a last resource they came over (Poor England !) to this country, lodged together in a house in Soho, and got on, living from hand to mouth, as well as they possibly could, considering their combined idleness and unthrift. After a while, monetary matters got more than serious with them, and the meeting which I have just mentioned was arranged for the discussion of the condition of their affairs.

In about a week from this time a number of foreign newspapers contained the announcement that an exhibition of foreign artists, under "distinguished patronage," would take place at an early date in London, and artists of all classes were requested to forward their works to the executive committee ; in addition to this a large number of very beautifully designed circulars, some of the most artistic productions I ever saw, were despatched, chiefly to the leading artists of

the continent, mentioning the fact that this exhibition offered unusual facilities, "not only for the exhibition, but for the disposal of their works," and so on.

The promoters, the executive council, the judges, the everything of this scheme, were the three broken-down individuals I have just drawn attention to, and such was the crass stupidity of the artistic foreigners, that in a very short time pictures, water colours, indeed paintings of every description were sent, carriage paid, of course, from almost every part of the continent to—shade of Millais!—such remote and aristocratic addresses as Blackfriars, York-road, and Battersea (where the three had respectively taken up their quarters, for the better purpose of carrying out their little game), amounting in value to a sum of not less than £14,000.

To prevent suspicion being aroused too soon among the unfortunate senders, the receipt of each picture was duly acknowledged by the "executive committee;" but, in course of time, as matters seemed, as the backwoodsman say, to get no "forrader," and the pictures not being returned, and no answers vouchsafed to the many letters of inquiry made from time to time, a few of the artists began to regard the whole affair as a big swindle, which it undoubtedly was, and thereupon made complaints to the Scotland Yard authorities, who entrusted the matter to me for investigation.

To find the exact houses in Blackfriars, York-road, and Battersea was indeed an easy matter, seeing that I was

already provided with the addresses by the defrauded and indignant would-be exhibitors ; but when I reached these places the birds had flown, and not a single trace of any one of the three swindlers or even of the pictures they had obtained could I find ; so I secured all the letters, some hundreds, which had been received after their departure, but to make sure I again made inquiries from the three different lodging-house keepers, and the last one, in Blackfriars, remembered that the driver of the cab conveying the load of pictures taken away from that particular house was told to drive to somewhere, the exact name of the street she could not tell, off Tottenham Court Road.

The outside public will, however, be pleased to know that there is a list kept, as complete as possible, of all real or suspected dealers in stolen property, with the name of the particular goods they deal in, at the " Yard," and this list is a pretty big one, too, I can vouch for. My next duty, therefore, was to examine it, and who, above all others, should I find in it but my old friend Burton—whose appearance of course I knew—described as of Chenies Street, Tottenham Court Road. I kept my eye on this gentleman for a few days, and at last met him coming up the street with a pair of very nice water-colours under his arm.

"Hallo, Mr. Burton," said I, when he got near enough, "you've got a couple of nice pictures there."

"Yes," he said. "I am going to try and sell them. I have had a lot of them sent over from the continent by some people, and I am asked to dispose of them."

"What do you want for them?"

"Oh, a couple of sovereigns."

"Well, I'll buy them, but you can carry them back to your house, for I would like to go with you to have a look at the others."

"All right," he replied.

We walked back to his lodgings, and after I had satisfied myself that the pictures, some twenty or so altogether, which he had hung round the sitting-room, corresponded to the descriptions and artists' names of those I had noted, I said:—

"Burton, I have had the advantage of knowing you for some time. My name is Sergeant Moser, of Scotland Yard, and I shall want a little further explanation from you as to how you became possessed of these different works of art."

"*Well*," he said, "you don't mean to say that——"

"Oh, yes, I do. You've been playing your 'tricks' a pretty long time, but you are caught this time."

He didn't "turn a single hair," so to speak, but was as cool and as indifferent as possible, treating the matter in a very ordinary and business-like manner indeed.

"You are *really* going to take me, then?" he inquired after a slight pause.

"Most certainly."

"I will tell you what I will do. I will take you at once to the men I got the pictures from if you will not arrest me

and free me from all consequences," was his proposal a minute or so afterwards.

"Well, we'll go and see," said I, and together we walked to the house in Soho, where the three Frenchmen had lodged before "organising their exhibition." Beckoning to a couple of policemen near, I requested them to accompany us into the house, where we arrested the trio, placed them in a four-wheeler, Burton and I with them inside, and a policeman on the box, in case of "accident." They all took the matter very coolly, and were duly taken to Bow Street.

"I thought," said Burton to me, "that you were going to let me free."

"When did I say so?"

"I am 'done' then, am I?" he remarked savagely.

"Yes, I think you are."

"Damn you!"

"Thanks."

The four prisoners were all duly charged, and after several remands had taken place to enable me to visit the continent and obtain the presence in this country of some of the witnesses, in order that the prosecution should be properly carried out, they were in a short time sentenced to various terms of imprisonment.

I managed to trace the different dealers, pawnbrokers, and others to whom the pictures had been disposed, and secure the whole of them, with the exception of nine, which Burton had managed to effectively palm away somehow.

Barton died in prison, having met with an accident which produced erysipelas.

The other three served out their sentences, and two of them went back to their own country ; the third (the artist) I saw some twelve months afterwards in Adelaide Street, Charing Cross, very energetically playing a cornet—he was a man of varied talents—and this particular musical qualification was the means of his support on more than one occasion.

"Well," I said to him, "you are out again?"

"Oh, it's you, is it?"

"Yes."

"Well, let me tell you I don't think much of you or your country!"

"No, I don't suppose you do; but if it troubles you so much, why on earth do you stay in it?"

"I am going to America as soon as I can raise sufficient money."

"Yes, I would," I replied. "That country is more spacious, and the scope there is larger for gentlemen of your enterprise."

"Do you think so?"

"Yes, I do."

My readers will be glad to hear that he kept his word, for in something less than a month he crossed the "pond," and is still, I believe, giving New York people the benefit of his qualifications.

The artists were very kind to me, several of them giving me presents of specimens of their own works, which, not being liable to the usual deductions made from gratuities at the "Yard," I was allowed to keep, and I retain them to this day as a memento of a not altogether uninteresting episode.

A DIAMOND ROBBERY



THIS case, of which the following are the chief particulars, may perhaps prove interesting to some of my readers, as it contains a few incidents of a somewhat unusual character. Indeed, I myself thought at the time—and do even now upon reflection—that it presented features even a little out the ordinary run of detective work. The great value of the goods obtained, the coolness and determination of the culprit, as well as the thoroughly desperate nature of the man when roused up to the exact position of his danger, convinced me that I got out of the difficulties which at one time threatened me with something almost akin to good luck. It is no joke at the best of times, even when you know your man and can put your hands upon him without much trouble, to make a successful arrest ; but when you have to encounter an individual whom you have never seen, whose characteristics you are totally unacquainted with, and whose physique you are not in a position to gauge, the odds are that even the pluckiest among us will occasionally realise the intense risk which is being run in order to make a capture satisfactory and complete.

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One day in July, in the year 1880, I was handed a telegram which had been received at Scotland Yard from the Brussels police authorities, giving a description of a man named Heine, who had decamped with over 400,000fr. worth of diamonds and other stones, which he had obtained by fraud, and who was supposed to have left, taking some circuitous route, for England. The telegram also mentioned that Heine's mistress had left Brussels prior to his departure, and it was possible she would likewise find her way to this country, to be eventually rejoined by her companion, which surmise proved to be the correct one. The details as to the appearance, ages, &c., of the twain were, as usual, characteristically meagre and unsatisfactory.

The route which Heine was credited with having travelled was viâ France, thence to London, probably with the purpose of being more likely to baffle his pursuers than if he had proceeded by the other and more usual way.

Naturally my first duty was to seek the whereabouts of the mistress, which I proceeded to do by commencing a series of inquiries in some of the well-known French quarters in the West-end. I think I made calls at about one hundred and fifty different places in the three days in which I prosecuted my search. I was, however, rewarded at last for my trouble by discovering her in a house very frequently made use of by foreigners in Panton Street, Haymarket, and a fine handsome woman she was. I kept a very careful watch upon her movements, and at seven o'clock in the evening of the second day after I had traced her, she was joined by a man

who I believed was the individual I wanted. To make more sure, I continued my watch the whole evening until they parted, following the man to an hotel in Leicester Square, where he evidently had "put up," thinking, no doubt, that by living separated from his mistress he stood much less chance of being found. I knew the landlord of this particular hotel very well, as I had frequently made calls there on some business or other, so had no difficulty in pushing my inquiries and obtaining additional particulars as to the time of the suspected one's arrival and so forth, with the result that no doubt remained on my mind but that he was the person required. Now to arrest him, for he was a powerful, well-made man, and from his appearance I felt convinced that he would prove a rather "tough" customer to tackle unless I adopted some ruse or other. I therefore asked the landlord to show me his bedroom, and on reaching that apartment I noticed that he had evidently prepared himself for the night, for his boots were on the mat outside the door. I knocked, and he called out, "Où est la?" "Le garçon," I replied. He then leisurely unfastened the door, which he had carefully locked and bolted, and cautiously opened it a little, which proceeding gave me the opportunity of at once putting my foot inside the room to prevent his closing the door again; perceiving it was not the waiter, he became very much alarmed, and was proceeding to shout for help, no doubt with the object of attracting attention and taking advantage of a temporary hubbub to depart, a subterfuge which men of his kind

often make use of, but, as a rule, with only varying success.

In a few moments, however, I forced my way into the room ; then I told him who I was, that I had a warrant for his arrest, which I produced, as well as a pair of handcuffs, to emphasise and illustrate my statements. He seemed perfectly staggered at the aspect of affairs, asked to see the warrant, put to me a whole string of questions in French, which I responded to, and finally requested me to sit down whilst he dressed, for he had taken off a portion of his clothes ready for bed. He seemed also very anxious that I should join him in a bottle of wine, an invitation which I need hardly say I declined with as much politeness as possible.

After a little pause he said to me, " I have a proposition to make to you."

" Well, what is it ? "

" You are a man of the world, are you not ? "

" Well, I think I have *some* knowledge of it, at all events," I replied.

" You don't want my body. Remain with me all night."

I said, " For what purpose ? "

He replied, " I will tell you by-and-bye," and, pulling out his pocket-book, selected about 20,000 francs in French and Belgian bank-notes and spread them all over the table in front of me, saying, " These are for you. Bandage my arms and legs with towels or handkerchiefs, or even use the handcuffs. You don't require to be too particular about the

fastening, and in the morning, long, long before the birds begin to sing—the rogue was poetical—I shall be on the road, miles away from here, and you having been asleep (of course after safely binding me), won't know anything at all about it, nor will you in the slightest degree possibly understand how I could manage to escape, you having done everything on your part you thought necessary to make safe your prisoner," and so on, and a great deal more of a like kind, accompanied by various winks and nods and signs, intended to more clearly make known his ideas. It was rather an artful suggestion on his part, but I respectfully declined this also, much to his disappointment and disgust at my apparent want of business aptitude and knowledge of having in my own hands what might be termed a good bargain. He seemed, in addition, quite surprised when I informed him that the Scotland Yard officials did not as a rule carry out their instructions in that particular sort of way. "Well," he said, "*mon cher ami, je vois que vous n'êtes pas satisfait,*" and, taking his coat and vest off again, deliberately unfastened a belt he was wearing containing several pockets—just such a belt as tropical and sometimes commercial travellers wear—in which were secreted a number of small carefully-folded paper packets; and, placing the lighted candle a little nearer, he proceeded to carefully open two or three of them and ostentatiously spread their contents—diamonds, rubies, and what not—all over the bank-notes, where they glistened most brilliantly. Seeing me still hesitating—I was getting impatient at the delay—

he said, "I am afraid you don't appreciate the full quality and richness of these stones by the illumination of one candle alone. I will light another," (and he did so, and they certainly proved a very beautiful and tempting display), further exclaiming, "They are yours, mon ami, all yours, every one; take them, put them into your pocket, and become a rich man for once in your life, and spend the rest of your days in something like luxury and ease." I declined again, but this time in a much more forcible manner, when finding me yet obdurate, he burst out quite hoarsely, his eyes glistening almost as brightly as the brilliants upon the table, with, "Well, name your own price and conditions." I had no conditions and no price, and as we had spent fully an hour together in a decidedly one-sided and unsatisfactory sort of attempt at bargaining, I not unreasonably considered it quite time to put an end to the useless preliminaries and prevarications and depart with my prisoner, and I intimated my decision to him, requesting him to complete his dressing as speedily as possible, stow away his valuables, and accompany me at once to the police station. When he was quite ready, he looked at me rather significantly, and inquired somewhat hesitatingly whether I had any one with me. I rather guessed his object, so at once replied. "Yes, a policeman downstairs," which, in reality, was not the case, but an exaggeration of the kind is surely permissible under the circumstances. He looked then for the first time thoroughly crestfallen, but when he discovered on our arrival at the front door that I was entirely without assistance, he suddenly

altered his demeanour, and called out very vigorously several times, "*Au voleur, au voleur*," which had the effect, as it usually has in such a locality, of bringing at once together a large number of low French women and their loafing male confederates, all ready and eager to lend a hand for the rescue of one of their countrymen in distress.

Something like fifty of these disreputable characters appeared on the scene, shouting, screaming, swearing, and bullying, an indescribable Babel, such as I never saw before even in the lowest quarters of Paris. I was first threatened, then entreated, then cautioned, and insulted, and pushed, and scratched, and you can readily picture to yourselves, readers, the somewhat "mixed" feeling with which I had to regard that howling, screeching, mob increasing every moment by other members of the same calling, the bulk of them under the influence of drink, and will then fully appreciate the difficulty and awkwardness of the position I found myself in.

I, however, seized tight hold of my man, and fortunately saw a policeman coming to my assistance, and, after some little further trouble with the crowd, we managed to convey the prisoner to the King-street Police Station, where he was carefully searched and his ill-gotten gains duly taken possession of and an inventory made of them. I was thoroughly tired out with my five days of arduous and exciting work, and was not by any means regretful when I got home and tried to enjoy some rest.

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The next day he was brought before the magistrate at Bow-street, when I deposed to everything which had taken place between us, of course including the description of his attempt to bribe me. Heine listened to it all most unconcernedly, denied all my statements with the utmost sang froid, and actually had the impudence to say at the conclusion of my depositions that he insisted upon the stones being weighed, for he believed that I had stolen some of them.

The magistrate, however, discounted these remarks at their true value, and remanded him for a week. In the meantime, I myself saw the stones weighed, and on Heine's next appearance he was asked the exact weight he had brought over. He mentioned some figure which was a gross exaggeration upon the quantity discovered upon him, entirely overlooking the fact that I had taken the opportunity of carefully examining his papers, etc., among which I found a memorandum of particulars, which gave the weights corresponding within a very few carats with the quantity recovered.

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It appeared on further inquiries that Heine had once, even up to a very short time previous to his decamping, occupied a responsible position with a diamond broker and merchant, dealing occasionally on his own private account very largely in all sorts of stones. Things had gone badly with him, however, but before losing his credit entirely he obtained on the strength of his previous good character the 400,000fr.

worth of goods on approbation (a custom still largely prevalent in the trade) from several merchants in Holland and Belgium.

I visited Brussels in 1882 (two years afterwards), and inquired after Heine at the prison there, and was informed that he had been sentenced to, and was then undergoing, four years' incarceration. Of his mistress I neither heard nor saw anything more.

A PECULIAR CLUE.

ABOUT half way up Jermyn Street, on the dusty, unshady side of it, that is, walking from the Regent Street end, you come to a turning where, by bearing to the right, you will by-and-bye be brought face to face with a little narrow passage, which passage, ever since London has been London and Jermyn Street what it is, has been the rendezvous of the chief money-lenders of the West-end, and remains to this day precisely in the same condition, architecturally and morally, as it did a couple of centuries ago, when the forefathers and progenitors of the present Israelites who trade there were probably hawking cheap wash-leathers and indifferent sponges or repairing windows with bad glass and worse putty in the more romantic and spacious wilds of Bloomsbury.

You cannot possibly mistake the place when you once get there—and everybody knows it—as it is so thoroughly peculiar to itself and its own particular history, for the whole passage consists of but merely a short row of half-a-dozen higgledy-piggledy old-fashioned houses, the lower parts of which serve for shops, the upper for offices, and the topmost, or attics, for town residences of gentlemen, many, if not most

of whom have served her Majesty in some shape or another, who live on half-pay, varnish their boots, belong to a club, stroll through the park in the morning, Regent Street in the afternoon, and pay ten shillings and sixpence per week per room ; coals and candles being considered as extras.

A small time-worn brass plate under the bell on the door of the third house intimated the fact that Smitherton and Co. occupied the rooms on the first floor, and if anyone then so disposed could have watched the office any morning at about ten o'clock they would have seen going along the passage, puffing and blowing somewhat energetically, the elderly, slightly gouty figure of Mr. Smitherton preparatory to engaging upon his day's work.

Mr. Smitherton, in spite of his English pseudonym, had a decidedly Hebraic cast of countenance, and possessed that peculiar shuffling, shambling sort of walk, or rather creep, which is a distinguishing feature of all the elderly gentlemen of his especial class.

He was not altogether a bad sort of looking man, in fact, occasionally (particularly when clients for the first time called upon him) he might with a little stretch of the imagination even have been called benevolent in his appearance. Report declared that he and Moses Abraham, whose name figured over the front of a large pawnbroker's shop in the Strand, were identical. That may be, we will not wait to inquire. He certainly was — although continually pleading poverty and hard times—very “well to do,” a sharp, shrewd man of business, who could draw his sixty

or eighty, or even a hundred per cent. interest, and feel, or rather look, positively aggrieved because it was not more—just the sort of man, in fact, reader, that you and I and all our friends and relatives would care to have as little as possible to do with, that is, if we respect our minds, bodies, and estates, and wish to be considered wise.

The little street, and, indeed, the whole of the immediate neighbourhood which had known Smitherton, or Abrahams, or whatever one may be pleased to call him, for the past fifty years, was one afternoon thrown into a tremendous state of excitement, for some no doubt intending customer had made his way upstairs, and instead of being ushered, after the usual preliminary inquiries, into Smitherton's little private room, was greatly astonished to find that, although the outer office door was unfastened, the safe door wide open, papers littered and strewn about, and business apparently still going on, no one answered his continued knocking on the little counter which ran across the outer office. The stranger, thinking this somewhat peculiar, pressed his way into the inner sanctum, and there found Mr. Smitherton tied in a chair with a large muffler and a silk handkerchief fastened tightly round his throat, and the old gentleman insensible and within almost less than an inch of being lifeless. To loosen the handkerchief and muffler was but the work of a moment, to bring old Smitherton "round" was a much greater and more difficult matter, but the new customer, who was a medical student—a St. George's man, by name Carstairs—and who, finding himself over-

running his usual monthly allowance, and in considerable "hot-water" with his people in consequence of its not being his first offence of the kind, had seen Smitherton's advertisement, "Money on note of hand simply, no questions asked, no security required, terms moderate, and no fees," which appeared regularly, and does now, in the *St. Thomas's Gazette*, thought it exactly suited his requirements, and felt quite grateful that a thoughtful Providence had placed such an accommodating gentleman within his (Carstairs') reach—soon brought his professional skill to bear, and half an hour's activity on the part of the embryo medico saw Smitherton "quite revived," but pretty well knocked out of time. Carstairs had been to the door and hailed a passer-by to fetch a policeman, and in a very short time, shorter than it takes me to write it, every soul in every house in the immediate vicinity knew all about it, how that Smitherton had been nearly strangled and his safe robbed, and the wrong-doers fairly away.

Smitherton, on his recovery, was greatly surprised to find that his clerk, named Branker, who had been many years in his employ, had decamped, taking with him all his own personal belongings, books, &c., which he had at the office, and suspicion naturally falling upon him, at this stage of affairs the case was handed over to me for investigation.

I learned from the old man that the clerk—an English-speaking Frenchman whom Smitherton had picked up when once on the continent, as he thought him smart, but chiefly because he got him cheap—had complained for some months

past that the work was increasing so much that he insisted upon some help being given to him in the office duties, and suggested a friend of his own, a young fellow he had found in London somewhere, as a useful and likely coadjutor. Smitherton, after some hesitation, agreed to see the young man, and if satisfactory would "perhaps engage him;" the proposed new clerk had presented himself on the afternoon in question just when old Smitherton was engaged in looking, with the assistance of Branker, through some papers he had taken out of the safe. When the newcomer arrived Smitherton at once closed the safe door, but could not for some reason or other take the key out, so to get the young fellow dispatched—being a suspicious old man and not liking strangers to know too much about his arrangements in the office—he took him into the inner room and entered into conversation respecting the appointment. To his intense surprise he found himself, without any notice whatsoever, suddenly seized by the throat, forced into a chair, the handkerchief put round his neck, and remembered no more until he regained consciousness. During this time he supposed Branker emptied the safe, which contained about eight hundred sovereigns—several sums which he had received in the morning—and the twain departed, having deliberately and successfully carried out a very nicely and carefully-planned affair.

No, he hadn't a photograph of Branker—no knowledge even of his apartments. The truth was that Branker slept regularly at the office on a shake-down he kept in a cupboard there, unknown to his master, in order to save expense. Didn't know

his friends ; didn't think he had any. Could he recognise him ? Of course ! And he was sure Branker would know of the eight hundred pounds being paid in, because he kept the books ; but not at all certain whether he would recognise the confederate. Certainly couldn't tell the kind of hat or coat he wore, and so on, in a similar unsatisfactory manner.

Things looked anything but lively on the strength of this almost worse than useless information.

"Had Branker any personal peculiarities ?" I inquired. "Let me see, I don't know. Oh, yes ; *he used to bite his finger-nails.*"

Well, this was *something*, at all events. Still I was not altogether over elated with the prospect of having to find a man simply on the evidence of possessing a habit of biting his finger-nails, for I felt sure that a good many people in all classes of society in London bite their finger-nails, even if they omit to wash them, and a hunt for any particular man on a slight clue of this description among five millions of people was a look-out I didn't altogether relish.

However, I thought it just as well to look round the premises first and see what I could pick up, and after opening all the cupboards, drawers, and closets in the place, and turning over dozens of dirty bundles of papers, I discovered in a desk, which Branker had apparently emptied in a hurry, among several scraps, an envelope addressed to Mdlle. Blanche, Rue St. Germain, Paris, and containing a letter. I carefully, and without tearing, opened this, and found it to be a missive, written in the most endearing

terms, requesting the lady to meet him in London at once, with a postscript added stating that he preferred, for family reasons, not to give any address, but that he would be sure to find her in some way if she came. Branker had in his haste evidently overlooked this, and forgotten to post or take it away. I copied the address in my note-book, fastened the letter up again, and posted it. I also telegraphed to the Paris police to watch mademoiselle very closely and report to me, came back to Smitherton's office, had another look round, and finding nothing more, waited the course of events. Four days afterwards I received a wire from Dover that mademoiselle had been seen to enter the early train for London, having been followed by the French police all the way from Paris, she having booked through. A description followed, and I was asked to meet the train on its arrival.

I was there as requested, and had no difficulty in recognising her ; in fact, I went up and spoke to her, saying that I was a railway official, and asking her if she wanted her luggage sending anywhere ? " No," she replied, in broken English ; " oh, no, please do not trouble, for I have only brought a small bag with me, and shall carry it myself." This conveyed to me an idea that she had heard from Branker since she had received the letter I had perused. I watched her out of the station, and she walked a considerable distance up Holborn, took a hansom, which I followed closely, and finally reached a private hotel close to Soho Square.

For three days I watched that place carefully, expecting Branker to turn up every moment to meet his *amié*. No, he seemed too cautious.

I then placed a female substitute on the duty and thought I would have a try to discover his whereabouts without waiting any longer. I went in and out of a large number of places, chiefly cafés, which I considered most likely, and at about ten o'clock the next night found myself at the well-known Café de la Lune, since pulled down, a notorious resort, where all sorts and conditions of indescribable adventurers and nomads gathered, a place where I suppose ninety per cent. of the foreigners who find it occasionally necessary and wise to quit their respective native countries for a while used to congregate. It was in the immediate neighbourhood of Fitzroy Square, and was quite a happy hunting ground for detectives, but still almost the last place in the world I could expect to find Branker, whom I thought had probably become sufficiently anglicised to possibly patronise our own restaurants, as many of his countrymen prefer to do after they have been on this side of the Channel for any length of time.

After a good look round the place I was just upon leaving it unrewarded for my trouble, when my attention was attracted to a rather noisy group of men sitting at a table in the shade of the door, which opened inwards, playing dominoes. I think there were five of them, and very jolly and devil-may-care they looked, as I stood for a few minutes watching the game. One of them boastingly

offered to bet a sovereign he would win. Now, sovereigns are not often bet in these sort of places upon games of dominoes, and I therefore took a pretty good look at this daring gamester—a young man of about thirty—it was his turn to play, and as he lifted his dominoes up to look at and select from, I saw to my indescribable surprise that his finger-nails had every appearance of having been bitten off short. “C’est impossible,” I said to myself, and quietly and unobservedly sat down at the next table, calling for something to drink so as not to attract attention. I had a very good look at the individual, and putting the pieces of old Smitherton’s description of his clerk together, totalled them up decidedly to the disadvantage of the man before me.

I couldn’t very well attempt by myself to arrest him in a rowdy sort of place like this, particularly as he had four stalwart-looking companions with him, so I stepped outside for a moment, arranged for a policeman to be near in case of need, and took into my confidence a passing youth, who accompanied me back to the table I had been sitting at. I ordered him some coffee to avert suspicion, and pointed out my “suspect,” asking him carefully to note his appearance. In a few minutes we both went out together, and I then asked my newly-found young friend to go in again and whisper to the man that Mdle. Blanche was waiting on the steps of the public-house next door but two, and would like to speak to him for a few moments. The ruse succeeded, and Branker was captured.

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In the afternoon of the day he was charged before the magistrate. Mdle. Blanche called at Scotland Yard in great distress, and told me that although she considered Branker's actions suspicious in not informing her of his whereabouts, nor calling upon her, she little thought he had been guilty of any complicity in a crime of this kind. He had promised her marriage, they having been "engaged" for some time, and, in consequence, she had given up her situation, and, being a stranger in London, didn't know what she would do. I told her to stay where she was lodging for a little while, and perhaps something would then turn up.

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I couldn't discover the whereabouts of Branker's accomplice, who was not one of the quartet at the table, nor, indeed, any trace of him, and to this day he might have been perfectly free had not his captured accomplice, with the characteristic "staunchness" of most criminals when found out, with the hope of lightening his own sentence by turning informer, "peached" upon his pal.

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Old Smitherton gave up the office, and now confines himself entirely to his Strand business, and his employés there say it is very difficult indeed to get the old Jew to see anyone now, except in the presence of a third party, generally one of his sons, who has charge of the "pledging"

department. The last time I saw the old curmudgeon was a few days after Branker's trial, when I managed to get twenty pounds out of him to recoup Mdlle. Blanche for her expenses and loss of time, the only occasion, I believe, upon which he has been known to perform a charitable action.

THE STORY OF A MOLE.

My experience has generally taught me that, difficult as it is on the whole to detect guilty men who are engaged in matters of a criminal nature, it is far, far more difficult when women are concerned. I would rather at any time, considering the chances of success in all their bearings, undertake the tracking of a wrong-doer of the male in preference to one of the female sex, though the former, sometimes with a thorough grasp of business in all its details, will occasionally plan and successfully carry out his "little job" with comparative ease, leaving no trace whatever behind, and getting safely away with the booty ; but I venture to say that men, as a rule, though business-like, are clumsy, and invariably, when finding themselves suspected, give out something in their manner or movements which leads up to their arrest.

On the other hand, a woman has a much greater command of herself. She can disport herself with less obtrusiveness ; her fingers and touch are lighter. (The most successful pickpocket I ever knew was a woman.) Her dress assists her, her sex in itself is a species of protection, and she possesses a certain unexplainable power of always, under circumstances of real danger, when her faculties are thoroughly

aroused, of defending herself, often with great success, by clever fencing and finesse.

These particular thoughts and opinions were never more fully emphasised and verified than in the case which was brought under my notice of the movements of a German baroness, who a few years ago paid this country a visit in order to escape from the meshes of her own country's law.

Her husband had been an officer in the German Army, and on his death the baroness found herself in possession of very little excepting a high-sounding name—being connected with one of the leading families in Berlin—and what little money she had been able to save out of a limited income of some £100 a year she had inherited, together with the few—very few—pounds her husband had managed to get together out of the miserable and microscopical pay he received for his devotion to the cause and welfare—mein Gott!—of his beloved fadderland.

The Baroness was about thirty-two years of age, highly accomplished and educated, had considerable personal attractions, and although married for some years had no family.

Nothing so natural but that she, finding herself thrown upon the world, should turn her attention towards the means of increasing her income and providing herself with congenial and profitable occupation. In the course of her search for such, she was introduced to a firm of so-called Army Contractors and Agents, who were at the best—although they had been known in the city where she resided

for a quarter of a century past,—a set of Jewish money-lenders, who, under the guise of agents, had wrought financial ruin and havoc among many of the brightest members of the many bright families in the district.

Knowing the position she held in society, and the respect her husband had enjoyed in the Army, this “firm” made overtures, and offered to her a very handsome salary and commission, and she in due time became what is known in our own vulgar and phlegmatic language—a “tout.”

In a short time she obtained a very large amount of business for her employers, and soon entered into a larger house, keeping that which foreigners so much delight in—an “establishment.” There she reigned so successfully that before long the salon of Baroness Lopell became as well known to all Germans as the lions in Trafalgar-square have to the average Englishman.

In this place she so increased her business until throughout the whole of the German Army there was hardly one officer who had not in some way or other—it might have been for outfit, or it might have been for money advanced, or it might have been for a hundred and one other things—of course, we may be sure at a pretty good percentage of profit—had business relationships with the firm, and these through the influence of the energetic and fascinating baroness herself.

Finance led to *faro*, or, rather, *faro* led to finance, for in a little room, through a pair of closely-guarded folding doors,

this exciting and entrancing game was nightly indulged in by the various and numerous visitors who thronged the baroness's charming villa. Many a reputation, I need hardly say, had been damaged, and many a fortune broken at this resort, which became eventually one of the most notorious gambling hells of the capital. In the former cases there was no possible reparation ; in the latter, the "firm" always came to the rescue, until at times they became the holders of a very large number of documents, familiarly known to us as "bills," which they were always ready (for the sharks had money—plenty of it) to discount for well-known names, at the modest and usual rate of some 60 per cent. or so. We carry out that sort of thing here, just as they do it on the continent, only in perhaps a worse manner.

The baroness amid it all made money by her commissions, and spent it, for she herself at last became greatly infatuated with gambling, and, like thousands of other women, trusted entirely to luck, and knowing nothing whatever of the ways of gamblers, which are peculiar, at last found that, not only had she lost all her available money, but had anticipated, to a very considerable extent, her future earnings, and parted with the whole of her right to her little fixed income. Besides this, she had borrowed far and near, having plucked the feathers from the younger and sillier portion of her patrons very freely, until at last she found her credit completely gone.

It was only one step from debt to dishonesty, and that a short one. The baroness took it, and in the effort to pro-

vide herself with a supply of ready money to meet her immediate requirements, began to forge and get discounted, alleging they were for some of her best customers, a number of bills. To such an extent did she find herself involved, one way or another, chiefly through her extravagance, that in very little time she had some fifteen thousand pounds worth of forged paper in circulation, and most of it maturing at "short" dates.

At last she became alarmed at the extent of her wrongdoing, and at the amount of the liabilities she had incurred, and instead of waiting, as perhaps many women would have waited, nearer the time when the latter became due, to see what might turn up, she got together all her personal belongings—her furniture and other effects had already been made subject to a charge which she was unable to pay off—secured the proceeds of another forgery of some five hundred pounds or so, and under the excuse that she was merely going to visit a fashionable watering-place close at hand for a few days, bid adieu to her old career, and came over to this—happy hunting-ground for many distressed people—country.

The bills in time became due (the baroness's house had closed in the meanwhile), and rumours were freely circulated that she herself had eloped with a not over worldly wise, but, withal, a wealthy elderly gentleman, whom she had been seen to be somewhat familiar with, who was a married man with a large, grown-up family, and all the rest of it—just such a rumour, reader, that would get about, and

does get about, under similar circumstances here in the regions of our own Mayfair—and the numerous forgeries were then discovered. The “firm” put the local police on the track, but all to no avail. Scotland Yard had not been advised in any way of the doings or disappearance of the peccant erring German baroness, nor, indeed, had any communication been made respecting the circumstances, for I only obtained the above particulars after what I shall hereafter describe had taken place some twelve months later.

One of my “informers,” a foreigner, came to me one day at the “Yard” and said, “Mr. Moser, I have just seen a very fashionably-dressed German lady at the bar of the——,” mentioning a well-known, but third-rate hotel in the Strand, “and I rather fancy there is something wrong somewhere. She seems very intelligent and highly educated, yet, strange to say, she, seeing me in the bar which opens into the passage leading into the hotel, spoke to me in fairly good English, and said she would like to ask me a few questions. I consented, whereupon she asked me where I thought she might obtain some employment. She belonged to a good family, and had been well trained, she said. But, owing to the death of her husband, was reduced in circumstances and was obliged to look after herself. She mentioned the name of the town in Germany she said she had come from, and after I had suggested that I thought an appointment as governess in some English family the most likely to meet her requirements, we arranged to meet again at the same

place the next morning, at eleven o'clock, and I would like you to be there to see her."

I agreed, and in the meantime I "wired" to Germany a description, according to my informant, as full as I could under the circumstances, and asking if they knew anything of the lady in question, and would they confirm my description.

"Yes; she was wanted for forgery committed twelve months ago," came the reply; "has a mole underneath the left shoulder; will send photograph and extradition papers over."

The next day I was introduced, through my informant, as a scholastic agent, who might be able to obtain her an appointment.

The description my informant gave seemed to be all right, and I thought, in my own mind, after a carefully guarded conversation, that she was the lady required.

After we had conversed for some half-hour or so, I quietly said to her, "You are the Baroness Lopell, who committed forgery in Berlin last year."

She never betrayed the slightest sign of anything but the utmost indignation, denying most strenuously the unworthy insinuation I had made, and that she would punish me for the insult. I was rather struck at the naturalness of the denial she made, but after a while I said, "Will you please accompany me to Scotland Yard, as that will set the matter entirely at rest one way or the other?" When there she was requested by the search woman to disrobe, but not the

slightest trace of anything approaching the appearance of a mole on her body could be found.

I consulted with my superior, and at his suggestion we let the lady go, making every apology to her for the inconvenience we had caused her. She departed with just a suspicion of a self-satisfied and I-told-you-were-wrong sort of a smile upon her face, and I must confess I felt slightly foolish at the turn things had taken.

The next day I made inquiries, as much for the purpose of further extending my apology as of curiosity to see her again. "The lady you inquire about paid her bill and left last evening, sir, saying she was returning to the Continent," was all I could get from the seedy, greasy, dirty-looking individual, who seemed to be a cross between a boots, barman, and waiter.

This looked curious, but I said nothing, and went about some other "work" I had in hand.

In a few days the photo and papers arrived. If I had had any doubt whatsoever in my mind as to the identity of the lady it was entirely dispelled now when I saw the photo, for she was undoubtedly the person wanted, and here, like the egregious fool that I was, I had let her slip through my fingers. Still, the particulars concerning the mole were repeated with great care, and evidently the Berlin officials laid considerable stress upon that mark of recognition.

I asked the search-woman more about her examination of the lady, and she declared, quite in a huff at my doubting,

even for a moment, her powers of observation, "There was not one."

I went once more to the hotel, thinking I would have just another look at the place. Something might come of it. I again interviewed my greasy friend, who, after he had finished blowing his nose on the plate-wiper he carried—oh, you people, whose eyes never see what your heart never would grieve for even if they could see, fight shy of greasy waiters carrying greasy cloths in greasy hotels—answered quite snappishly that he didn't know anything about her, and didn't want to be bothered; but this being too hurriedly said to be natural, I determined to watch his movements carefully. About five o'clock a letter was brought to him, which he opened, read, folded, and put into his waistcoat pocket, after casting a somewhat uneasy glance at me, I meanwhile having taken a seat, and ordered some refreshment.

I then asked him for a second supply of coffee, after which, in the waiter's absence, I purposely dropped my ring under the seat. When he came back I pretended to be alarmed for its loss, and requested him to join me in the search, which he did with such considerable energy (so much energy, in fact, that I was able to quietly pick the letter from his pocket unknown to him), anticipating a tip, which I gave him after he had found it. Whilst he was attending on some other customers, I perused the note which contained the few words, "Do you think I might

safely come back?" and signed "Alicia Lopell," the address given being in Kennington.

I made a copy of the note, placed it again in its envelope, threw it on the floor behind the table to the next one I was sitting at, and, calling for the waiter, said, in a chaffing spirit, "I see, waiter, that you have dropped the letter which your 'Elizabeth' has sent you." "Yes, sir," said he, picking it up nervously and looking at me askance, but seeing that I apparently did not trouble about it he quietly pocketed it.

Half an hour's cab ride brought me to the house in Offley Road, Kennington, where the baroness was lodging. I stepped into the passage on the door being opened, and asked the landlady to say to the lady, if she was in, that the waiter from the hotel desired to speak to her.

The ruse "took," the baroness came out of the sitting-room, and on noticing me, ejaculated, "Heavens! is it you again?"

"Yes," said I, "it is, and you don't escape me this time," producing my warrant and the photo, upon the back of which were the initials of the baroness, and at which she started guiltily.

"I did not commit forgery," she said. "You shall be punished severely for this, your second and unpardonable insult. You will see that I shall come out free in this matter; I shall not be imprisoned, and you shall hear about it," and so on.

At last I prevailed upon her (for she had not forgotten

her manners) to accompany me to Bow Street, whereupon she was extradited and taken by me, viâ Hamburg, to Berlin. She relented considerably in her manner towards me before we had completed the journey—in fact, asked my advice upon several matters, which I cheerfully gave her.

“You will see that I shall come out free from the matter,” were again the words, the last words, I heard her say, as I handed her over to the authorities.

About six weeks afterwards she wrote me saying, “You remember what I told you ; it is perfectly true, for I am not to be proceeded against.”

And then I learned that the baroness’s old customers, finding themselves likely to be called into court as witnesses if the “firm” prosecuted her, had almost immediately after the lady’s departure “squared” matters with the money-lenders, and when the case was called on, a non-appearance was entered, and my captive was set free.

The mole was a piece of redundant fiction on the part of the German authorities, who must have muddled the description up somehow.

“MISSING.”



THOSE who read the daily papers and note therein from time to time the record of a “mysterious disappearance,” will hardly credit the fact that in the year 1887 these cases in London alone, in the twelve months indicated, made up a grand total of 18,004. These were, of course, the “reported” cases; there were probably in the same period a fifth as many more unreported, including the poor miserable outcasts whom nobody knows and nobody misses; whose bodies turn up at all sorts of unexpected times and in all sorts of unexpected places, emaciated, unrecognisable. Where they came from, and who they are, are details out of the ken of the teeming millions of this huge metropolis of ours, for at the best of times, and even under the most favourable conditions, the most prominent personage can only with difficulty in these fleeting times be kept before the public.

A man may be at the very pinnacle of prosperity and fame, occupying the highest position in the State, and, as it were, by his name influence the whole social world. He dies; there is a general mourning, and within twelve months after the clods have rattled on his coffin he is forgotten, and

but for the occasional reminder by some of the acts of his life-time's beneficence still operating upon his fellow-workers he has left behind, or by the fact that a grateful parish or a faithful friend has erected something in the shape of a permanent monument to perpetuate his memory, his name, life, and actions are, after the space of a very short time, entirely obliterated. If the chief actors of this world's numbers are thus so easily disposed of, no wonder, then, that the shreds of humanity, the mere fragments of the units of existence, are lost sight of altogether. Add to these the figures already given, also the completely "concealed births," (infantile life with a brief existence sacrificed to passion, want, and despair); total all together those that are "missing" in London, and they do not fall far short of 40,000 per annum.

Out of the 18,004 only 9,203 were restored to their friends, 85 others were found who had committed suicide, and we thus have roughly, 9,000 persons—about 26 per day—who are absolutely unaccounted for. This I consider is one of the most serious problems of our social existence—the huge number of those who depart in some entirely unaccountable manner. What becomes of them? Where do they go to? And who is responsible for their keeping?

Now, in a story of this description, which is written merely to picture some of the true incidents of my detective life and work, it would be very much out of place to elaborate upon this great and growing evil which exists in our midst, but I do commend these figures and facts to the reformers, the

philanthropists, and the earnest workers among us, and ask them to endeavour to do something which shall lessen considerably the difficulties or the inability to find all or the greater part of these missing people. We are told in Scripture that even a solitary sparrow has a recorded place, but here in this great Babylon, right at our very doors, aye, even at our elbows, thousands—a whole township, in fact—of precious human lives every year pass out of our circles without recognition or note. The very dust-heaps are searched and made use of for their anticipated value as articles of commerce, but the blood, brains, lives, and souls of our fellow-beings are suffered to pass away unnoticed. Whether the fault lies with us individually—and, no doubt, our own personal selfishness is to a great extent the cause—or whether it is the fault of the community at large, the executive of the Government, or the failure of some of our administrative machinery, I am not able to say, but I do say this, that the whole question wants taking up, inquiring into, and reporting upon, and herein lies the work of no one less than a “Howard” in a subject bristling, as it does, with vital importance.

If any person in London should be “missing,” and Scotland Yard is requested to take the matter in hand, the individual who makes the request is told that the police cannot interfere unless it is suggested (with a fair amount of proof forthcoming to substantiate the suggestion) that foul play of some kind or another has taken place, and the informer is generally sent empty away and told to employ a private de-

tective, all that is done on the part of the "Yard" being the taking down of the description of the missing one, and the circulation of such description in the police information of that day, a periodical which no one outside the force ever sees, and which nobody inside the force cares a single solitary straw about ; and even if each member did, how on earth can a body of men possibly hope to recognise in five millions streaming about them all day the exact individuals they want, purely from a briefly printed description. All the chief daily papers ought to be made use of by our Government for this purpose, with the probability that every reader would be interested in the matter, and thus unconsciously an enormously large detecting force would be effectively, though silently, at work.

Shortly after I left Scotland Yard, a "missing" case was sent in from there for me to take up in my private capacity. It was a curious case, and one which I think of quite sufficient importance to make known.

It concerned Lord Blank, who reached me one day in very great distress of mind, and informed me that his daughter, aged 15, had left home without any notice whatever of her intention, and up to the time of his seeing me she had not returned.

It appears that the girl had borrowed two pounds from one of the servants, and had left the house on the previous afternoon ostensibly for the purpose of making some purchases or other—in fact, to do some shopping. Her non-return at the usual dinner hour caused the family great

alarm, as they thought at home that she had been robbed, and feared that perhaps something even very much worse might have happened.

Well, here was a case positively without any clue whatsoever to go upon, and no one outside my profession can tell the almost absolute hopelessness with which I undertook to investigate that apparently perfect mystery. It was a cheerless expedition, I can tell you. On the one hand, a greatly agitated, in fact, almost frantic father, and on the other not the faintest shadow of the whereabouts of the straying damsel. Had she gone west, north, south, or east? No one could say. I had never seen her before; I had no knowledge of the colour of her ribbons or the style of her wearing apparel wherewith to recognise her, and London, a large place at the best of times, becomes, when you are sent forth upon an unsatisfactory errand of this kind, absolutely illimitable.

No time was to be lost, however, and I at once obtained a photograph of the young lady (the only one the father possessed was one exhibiting his daughter taken in an indoor costume, and even the most perverted of young ladies would hardly be likely to go about this roaring city without a hat and jacket), had a woodcut made, bills printed off and circulated amongst all the police and railway stations, cab ranks, and so forth, giving the best description I could, and offering a reward, after doing which I returned to his lordship's residence to see if I could pick up any further details or particulars likely to be of use to me. No

much help though did I get, and I was beginning to think that I might quite as well have remained in my office, when just as I had left the house—the servant had closed the front door—I beheld a dirty, low-looking man, a Jew, who seemed to watch me very closely, and I rather wondered what he was doing in this apparently aristocratic neighbourhood. However, I was saved further surmise by his coming across the road, stopping me, and asking me the question, "Are you Lord Blank?" The thought at once struck me this man knew something, so I answered promptly, "Yes, what do you want?" He said, "If you will give me one hundred pounds, I will tell you where your daughter is." I said, "Where is she? and what is your name?" He replied, "I shall not tell you." I immediately took him firmly by the collar, and said, "I am not Lord Blank, I am a police officer, and if you don't tell me where the young lady is, off you will come with me to the station!" He seemed pretty well taken aback, and pleaded hard for me not to place him under arrest, and "if I would only accompany him he would show me where the girl was." I readily accepted his suggestion, and we both got into a hansom and drove to Little East Street, Mile End. No one can realise the character of that street, or indeed the whole neighbourhood, and the filthy oozing hovel I was taken into. There in a back room I found this man's wife and three girls, who were button-hole making, and our lost young lady, who when she saw me immediately guessed my errand, commenced to sulk, would give me no information—in fact, absolutely refused

to reply to my questions. Addressing the wife, I said, "How did this girl come here?" She informed me that whilst returning from having delivered a portion of completed work at a warehouse, she was walking down Cheapside, when she was accosted by the young lady, who told her that she wanted to know where the flower-girls lived, as she wished to see what kind of lives they were leading, and after a certain time to become one herself. The woman, who was a very sharp woman (as becomes the wife of a Jew), had noticed the superior appearance of the girl, and at first kindly thought that unless she took her to her own home some harm might come to her. She detained her, and having heard from the girl that her father was a rich nobleman, and herself an heiress, promptly turned worldly wise, and thought that a considerable profit might be made upon the transaction, particularly after placing the matter of negotiation in the hands of her husband, who it may be mentioned had hardly been so successful in his negotiations as he probably anticipated.

The young lady had passed the night among these people, and was for a time apparently content with her surroundings. I, however, insisted upon her returning with me to her father, which, after some reluctance, she did, and from what I afterwards learned, the primary cause of her freak was the becoming "enthused" over the descriptive scenes of the squalid East-end in Mr. Walter Besant's book, "All Sorts and Conditions of Men," and she had determined to investigate them herself, with the result above noted.

* * * * *

I need hardly express the delight of the father and friends, and the utter disgust of Mr. Jacobs, the Jew, who to this day says I am "von dam thief," and that I "did" him clean out of £100.

I last saw my young "capture" on horseback a few months ago in the "Row." She looked happy enough, and apparently had altogether forgotten what might have been a very serious matter. Certainly she had entirely forgotten me, for I glanced over the railings pretty steadily at her neat little figure, admiring the manner she handled her cob. If she had remembered me I feel sure she would have spoken, for when she became more herself she wrote me a very nice little letter full of grateful thanks for all the trouble I had gone to in rescuing her from her perilous escapade.

THE CAREER OF A FRENCH YOUTH.

THIS story, though so different in its details from the one last related, amplifies, if possible in a still greater degree, the utility of the unexpected. One cannot very well—at all events at the present unexplored, and therefore undeveloped, condition of the science of second sight—place the what-may-happen upon such a basis that it can be brought into everyday and common use. It would be very unpleasant indeed for most of us if such a state of things existed by which we *could* foresee that which will actually occur, although I am bound to confess such a condition of things in certain latitudes would be exceedingly welcome to detectives in general, and to me in particular—that is, of course, provided that other and outside people were not invested with the same powers—and spare us an immense amount of trouble, expense, and time.

The experience I am about to relate is not by any means an ordinary one, and yet when looked at from our nineteenth century standpoint of enlightenment, is about as commonplace an incident as could possibly happen, for it might have occurred to anybody, just as it occurred to me.

In the middle of August, 1881, the Scotland Yard authorities received particulars from the French police that a youth of that country, named Paul Baker, had stolen 5,000 francs, and was believed to have left Dieppe for Newhaven. Then followed the meagre, silly, and almost useless "description," which I touch upon in my next "story." I did my best on the clutch-the-straw principle, looked round me in London, made inquiries at the different railway stations, and set all my "informants" to work, but with no satisfactory results. At last the "Fates" worked with me.

I picked up the *Daily Telegraph* at the breakfast-table one morning, and in looking (my thoughts leagues away from the young man whom I "wanted") down the "Provincial Intelligence" column which the paper possessed in those peaceful days, when Parnell Commissions had not troubled and politics were more or less at rest, and my eye was attracted by the following:—

NEWHAVEN.

A Frenchman, name unknown, attempted to commit suicide yesterday by throwing himself off the cliff.

I immediately went and made a report at the "Yard," and requested that a telegram should be at once despatched to Newhaven to inquire who the man was. The Newhaven police replied "that the man refused to give any explanation of himself whatever," but the description they gave resembled somewhat the man I required, and off I went, and in the workhouse in the town I found a young dilapidated-looking

Frenchman, with a severe wound under the chin, which necessitated his remaining in bed. I entered very closely into conversation with him, and he at last confessed that he was the individual "wanted." I asked him about the money, and, in fact, the whole affair. He explained that he was nineteen years of age, and had been apprenticed for a term to a firm of artificial flower-makers in the Faubourg St. Denis, Paris, and from time to time had been sent to cash the usual monthly draft for payment of wages of the employés in the concern. He said that he had an extremely irksome, hard time of it there, being considered the *bête noir* of the establishment, was cruelly treated by the members of the firm, and, in consequence, his life being made a perfect misery to himself, he at last made up his mind for revenge, and the opportunity occurred when he was next sent upon the mission to the bank. He possessed himself of the 5,000 francs, which were handed to him in five notes of a thousand francs each, and instead of returning to his employers with the money, he went to the Gare St. Lazare (the Western Railway of France), had some refreshment, tore three of the notes into shreds and threw them into the gutter (couldn't give a reason why he did this), and purchased a ticket for Newhaven, *viâ* Dieppe, where in due time he arrived, my attention having been drawn to his presence in that town in the manner already indicated. He further stated that his motive for attempting suicide was purely a revengeful one; but, however, after hurting his chin by the fall, without successfully carrying out his original intention, he had some

little time for contemplation, which I suppose resulted in the decision in his mind that suicide at the best of times and circumstances, particularly when attended with non-success, is hardly a pleasant occupation. He had gone, however, about the act in a thoroughly business-like and determined manner, as he had interred the remainder of the money in a hole at the top of the cliff. Accompanied by the local sergeant of police, I went to the indicated spot, and there found buried, about a foot deep, a purse folded up in a coloured handkerchief, and upon examining the contents I found one of the notes torn completely into shreds, some 200 francs in gold, and a few shillings in silver. The fragments of the note were so small that it was utterly impossible to paste them together again. I left Newhaven, as my prisoner was not in a fit state for removal, it being understood that as soon as he was thoroughly convalescent the police would let me know. The time at length expired, and I went down again and brought him up to Bow Street, and as the necessary papers of extradition had not arrived, he was remanded for a week. And here it may not be out of place to say extradition prisoners are dealt with in two different ways. The first is, that it happens at times that telegrams are received at Scotland Yard from the foreign police authorities asking the English officials to arrest a person forthwith, stating that the extradition will be immediately applied for, and that the warrants in the respective countries have been granted.

Provided with this telegram, the police officer in charge

of the case applies, when French prisoners are remanded, to the courteous and extremely amiable M. Taillefer, advocate to the French embassy, and in the case of Germans to the consul-general to the German Empire, &c., &c., who in turn apply to the chief magistrate at Bow Street Police Court—all extradition matters are attended to at Bow Street Police Court—by laying a sworn information that the accused's extradition will be demanded by the respective Governments.

'This is done to make such Governments solely responsible and liable for the apprehension.

After the granting of the warrant in England the police officer may arrest, and a remand invariably takes place, pending the arrival of the foreign depositions, the magistrate's duty being simply to see that a *prima facie* case is made out and to commit the prisoner to take his trial in his own country.

The warrants which have been granted simply upon the application of the foreign representatives are called *provisional* warrants, and I may here point out the hardships frequently experienced by foreign prisoners, who are sometimes remanded from week to week (oftentimes for a period of two months) in the House of Detention before the depositions reach this country, and after all the charge may not be proved, as I have known in several cases.

And I may also further point out that in no instance will the magistrate accept bail in these cases.

The second way is a much simpler and better one. The

foreign Powers send, prior to the application for the warrant, the whole of their depositions to their ambassadors in London, who in turn forward them to the Foreign Office and then to Bow Street Police Court. The magistrate, upon perusal, may grant a warrant, which is then sent to Scotland Yard for execution. Once the prisoner is arrested, the depositions already in the hands of the magistrate are read to him, and he may, on the first hearing, be at once committed. I may, however, also mention another hardship experienced by foreign prisoners—or, at least, this was so up to the time of my leaving Scotland Yard in 1887.

The hardship is (and it is no light one) that the prisoner, after being committed, had actually to remain in this country, even when he had pleaded guilty to the charge, fifteen days before his extradition could take place, a state of things which I sincerely hope, for the sake of the credit of justice, is now remedied. Readers may, perhaps, like to know the manner in which detectives take foreign prisoners to their respective countries. It is as follows:—Four days prior to the expiration of the fifteen days, the officer in charge of the case makes his report to his superintendent, stating when the time expires, and he then submits the name of the officer who has arrested the prisoner to the Home Office. Two warrants are then issued, signed by the Home Secretary himself, one directing the keeper of the House of Detention to hand the body of the prisoner to the officer; and the other for the officer, who gets a receipt for the prisoner's body from the

foreign authorities ; the receipt on the return of the police officer being forwarded to the Home Office.

The extradition prisoners for France and Italy are conveyed *via* Dover to Calais, and for Germany and Austria they are taken to Hamburg by water. There has only been one extradition with Spain, and I am the only officer who had the fortune to be associated with it, having arrested a man for forgery on the Bank of Spain, he being conveyed by me to Vigo.

The prisoners taken to France are fetched away from the House of Detention about a quarter to eight, and are taken to Dover by the morning mail train. Calais is reached at twelve o'clock, and the officer is compelled to return by the next train from Dover, thus making it an extremely hard day's work. The German prisoners are taken by the General Steam Navigation Company to Hamburg—seven days are allowed for the trip there and back—giving the officer (and in rough weather too), only one day for rest. 13s. 11d. is the daily allowance made to an inspector whilst conveying these prisoners, and out of this sum he has to defray all his hotel expenses, &c. This 13s. 11d., so beautifully expressive in the exactness and simplicity of its amount, *includes* the plain clothes allowance.

The week having at length expired, and the necessary papers having been received, I proceeded, with Sergeant Pitman (now inspector), who was then acting as gaoler, to Baker's cell, where, to our great consternation and surprise, we found that he had hanged himself, having passed a hand-

kerchief through the perforated holes then existing for ventilating purposes at the old Bow Street Police Court. We immediately cut him down, life not being quite extinct, a doctor was sent for, and Baker was thoroughly restored ; his former wound, however, owing to his temporary, but unpleasant, suspension, had re-opened, and once more my prisoner found himself in the hospital. He recovered, and was duly committed to take his trial in France.

The day arrived for my having to convey him to Paris and hand him over to the French authorities. The poor wretch—or, rather, what was left of him—looked a very miserable specimen of humanity indeed. Naturally a not very attractive-looking youth, the confinement had considerably lessened what little bulk his figure might have originally possessed. We left Holborn Viaduct en route for Dover by the 7.35 A.M. train. When on the journey, partaking of some refreshment, hard boiled eggs and sandwiches (I had obtained some coffee at the railway station), I asked my co-traveller whether he felt hungry, and would accept an egg. He took one, which of course was shelled, and then, to my utter astonishment, I saw him put the whole of it into his mouth at once. I first thought that it was simply ravenous hunger that made him do this, but I soon realised the exact position of affairs when I found that he was choking ; then it struck me that it was another attempt on his part to do away with himself, which surmise proved to be correct. I had the greatest trouble to make him disgorge the egg, for he positively refused ; and it was not until

I used considerable personal violence by hitting him on the back of his neck, that a portion of the egg dropped out of his mouth; I continued, however, to chastise him until he entirely desisted, perfectly exhausted with his struggling. Few people can realise the *mauvais quart d'heure* that I passed in that carriage, for supposing he had succeeded in choking himself the whole blame would have been on my shoulders, and disinterested kindness would have received another serious check. I very seldom use handcuffs, as they are awkward, cumbersome things, extremely difficult to put on, and if the person who has to wear them objects to have them placed on his wrists, it takes a man all his time to get that person handcuffed. They are, no doubt, very effectual when once on, but even then they are a source of danger to the officer in charge, who might, when alone with a prisoner wearing handcuffs in a railway carriage, be easily attacked by him. There are many instances where this has occurred. Besides, an experienced thief can unfasten the ordinary handcuffs by knocking the spring portion against a hard substance, and for this reason I greatly prefer the French and Belgian handcuffs, which I hope to describe at a fit opportunity. In this instance, however, fearing that something else might transpire, I did place handcuffs on Baker's wrists, and I was not at all sorry when I got rid of my burden at Calais.

The following year, being engaged on "Fenian" work in Paris, watching the notorious head-centre, James Stephens, being stationed there for about six months, whilst walking

along the Boulevard Poissonnière one day, I felt my shoulder touched by somebody, and who should I see but my friend Baker, looking considerably improved. I said to him, "Hallo ! what are you doing here ? I thought you were in prison !" He replied, "Oh no. My case aroused a considerable public sympathy, as I had stolen the money purely to revenge myself on my employers, and being young, the judges thought that I had suffered quite enough by what I had already gone through, and I was accordingly acquitted." I remarked, "You still have that mark on your neck ;" whereupon he answered, with a significant smile, "C'est un souvenir d'Albion." I said, "What are you doing now ?" He replied, "I am in some employment." I asked, "Where ?" Shaking his head knowingly, he responded "I am not going to tell you ; you might inform my people, and that would never do." We then shook hands most cordially, and parted the best of friends.

A MURDER AND A SEQUEL.

THIS story is one of perhaps more than passing interest, inasmuch as it tends to show that the totally unexpected incidents occurring in our midst often prove to be of the greatest possible service to those who least expect assistance from the extraneous and the merely accidental. It is also another powerful illustration of the absolute necessity for all those in—and, indeed, for most of those outside—my calling to have at every time and upon every occasion their ears and eyes open ; to be, in fact, thoroughly “ wide-awake,” noting every little detail in matters of even apparent insignificance, and seizing every available opportunity to increase one’s knowledge of the everyday and most commonplace circumstances of life. If anyone had previously intimated to me that by merely partaking of my customary lunch in my customary corner of my customary café, where so much business is transacted and so much bustle and excitement continually go on, would have led up to the discovery of the guilty person whose capture I had for many reasons well-nigh despaired of, and whose existence I had almost forgotten, I should have felt very strongly inclined to dis-

believe it, and perhaps have taxed my informant with an attempt to impose upon my credulity. It was thuswise.

One mid-day, in the cold raw spring of '84, I was seated at luncheon in one of the best known of the large cafés in the Strand, so thoroughly absorbed in myself and the good things immediately before me that I did not for some considerable time after commencement notice that at the table at the other side of the room, but exactly opposite to me, sat a lady and gentleman engaged in precisely the same occupation as myself. The lady was an auburn-haired divinity, with a "pronounced" manner and somewhat showily dressed, and who, I afterwards learned, was a member of the second row of the corps de ballet of one of the large theatres in Leicester Square. She was young and rather pretty. Her companion, an elderly, middle-sized gentleman, was very neatly attired, and looked a respectable, responsible, quiet sort of man; his white hair, however, contrasting somewhat keenly with the generally youthful appearance of the lady—a couple as ill-assorted in age, presence, and style as one could possibly be brought to imagine; but this casual mixture of feminine May and masculine December, flashiness and respectability, is not by any means an unknown quantity in the lively, Bohemian quarters in the neighbourhood of the Strand.

After finishing their meal and claret and discharging their bill the couple walked out together into the main thoroughfare. The waiter then proceeded in the manner usual to such individuals to "clear up," when suddenly his eyes—

rather fishy, foreign-looking eyes they were—rested, if his eyes ever did rest at all, which I doubt very much, upon an umbrella mounted with a large gilt crook, the then reigning fashion in stick and umbrella handles. He proceeded to examine it very carefully and in a thoroughly professional manner, and apparently realising its value—which I, at a rough guess, at some ten yards' distance, should have thought to be about 30s.—placed it under the seat until he had thoroughly re-laid the table. He then took it out of its temporary hiding-place, and not for some extraordinary reason or other (as I did not attempt to disguise my presence) noticing me, walked stealthily away with it, inserting the handle up his rather baggy sleeve. I became naturally interested—if a detective should not, who should?—and as I had nothing particular to do that afternoon, lighted a cigar and calmly waited the development and turn of events.

As was not unreasonably to be expected, the fair owner and her male escort returned in a short time for the missing article, and finding it had disappeared called for the waiter who had attended upon them. He was not to be found, having at three o'clock gone off duty, as is customary in that establishment, and would not return until later in the day. The manager, who had been called into consultation, said "he would inquire about it," "was very sorry," made as many excuses as a gentleman in his position in life could, bowed lowly, and took the lady's name and address, and "if it should turn up he would send it," and if it didn't turn

up, well, "he couldn't," &c., &c., and so on; was very polite, as managers of restaurants invariably are, and the lady and gentleman departed, not too particularly well pleased with the result of their second visit to the establishment.

At five o'clock—I had been there just three hours, and the staff in general, and the manager in particular, were beginning to stare at me and almost regard me as a fixture—the waiter returned and proceeded to his duties in the ordinary way. After he had settled down a little, arranged his apron—all the waiters wear aprons there—I called him by name to me. I had in the meantime managed to learn that he was known throughout the place as Alphonse—I don't suppose there is a single café in London without its Alphonse—and looking him straight and full in the face, I asked him bluntly what he had done with the umbrella he had taken away. The question, as I expected, somewhat staggered him and he turned very pale, but quickly recovered himself, replying in the blindest possible broken English, that he had "taken it 'ome, monsieur"—foreign waiters never pronounce the "h," that is, if they can help it—"so that it would be quite safe, monsieur, in case dat de lady called for it again, monsieur." The reply was ingenious and clever, but not altogether satisfactory to perhaps a somewhat biassed man like myself. I then told him who I was, and that I insisted upon his taking me there and then to his 'ome, or lodgings, or wherever he resided. He lost nerve entirely at this, and trembled very much, but I got him without any

difficulty or disturbance into a hansom and drove him to the address he gave, which was one of those suspicious sort of places, part club, part gaming-house, part hotel, part anything-you-please, which then abounded and still exist in the neighbourhood of the Haymarket. My knowledge of such houses is somewhat extensive, but this particular one I had not, as far as I could remember, visited before ; he opened the door with a latch-key and led me uninterruptedly right up to his room (which was a small apartment at the top of the house), lifted up the covering of the bed, and produced the umbrella from between the mattress and palliasse, and with a smile, experienced but bland, handed it to me and bowed. He was a clever young rascal, and was eventually, in connection with another matter, rewarded with "fourteen days." The umbrella was conveyed to its proper owner.

As is usual in such cases,—as, indeed, I do in all cases in which I find myself concerned,—I made an entry of the circumstance in my note-book, with a full description of "Alphonse," and in taking out my pocket-book I came across a warrant which had been in my possession some time, and from the very meagre description accompanying it I had entirely given up all hopes of ever finding the person "wanted ;" the only thing about it attracting my attention was that it originated from a town in Normandy, and although I was accustomed to receive instructions from almost all the cities and towns of the continent, I had not previously had any dealings with the place cited in this particular warrant. But this event did not appear to make

my prospects of arresting the right individual any the brighter, so I folded the paper up again and returned it to its case, and then sought the landlord to make inquiries about the character of the waiter, his antecedents, &c. ; also to see what the house itself was like, and who were the tenants generally. I found Monsieur L'Ange a fair specimen of his class—one of a large gang of men who, I am afraid, prey and live upon ill-fame and equivocal morality, who “dodge” the licensing laws, hocus the authorities, are far too wide awake even for the sharpest, and whose wives do the work whilst the husbands look after the “customers” and the cash. They are generally men with “pedigrees” and unsavoury reputations, who make their living (sometimes a fairly comfortable one) in all sorts of ways that are suspicious and peculiar. Monsieur L'Ange was very cordial, and, after learning who I was, most polite ; he ordered a bottle of wine and some cigars, which were brought in by a fine buxom serving-girl about 24 years of age, but who could speak very little English. I was rather attracted by the fresh French appearance of the girl, and asked her where she came from. She replied, “The Midi, monsieur.” “Oh,” I said, “what part?” She coloured a little and remarked “Maçon.”

I asked her, remembering the town named in the depositions, if she knew Blankville. “Oh, no,” she replied, but I thought rather emphatically ; however, I was not in the least suspicious until she came in on a *second* occasion when bringing some vestas. She then looked scared and some-

what agitated, whereupon I said "Are you sure you don't know Blankville?" "Quite sure, monsieur, quite sure," when she quitted the room as if anxious to get out of the way. After a few whiffs of my cigar, and exchanging some conversation with the proprietor, chiefly concerning Alphonse, about whom I gathered that he lived at the hotel, giving about three hours of his services, from 12.30 A.M., in exchange for his board and lodging, I asked L'Ange in a casual manner how long the girl had been in his service. He said nearly six months; she was well-behaved and a good worker, and had left the Midi, he believed, on account of a quarrel with her sweetheart. I then once more carefully looked through my papers, but found the girl did not in the least answer the description sent over by the French police; and I may here incidentally remark that my experience at Scotland Yard was such that it confirmed me in my opinion of the great carelessness and neglect on the part of the foreign authorities in failing to send over to England accurate descriptions of the people "wanted." The French police have printed forms with items such as nose, eyes, &c., printed upon, and these are mostly and very stupidly filled up as "ordinaire." They seldom particularise the peculiarities of any person, thus rendering a difficult work still more difficult, and in many cases dangerous, as one might easily apprehend the wrong individual. Of course these descriptions did not help me in the least; in fact, they tended to considerably confuse me, but still the age of the girl and that stated upon my papers seemed to agree, and I

could see that she was greatly upset. Ringing the bell, ostensibly to ask her for a fresh supply of lights, when she made her appearance I said very quickly to her, "You are Suzanne Ricord, of Blankville," whereupon she shrieked aloud and fell upon the floor in a dead faint. The proprietor's wife, hearing the fall, rushed in, and there was no little excitement in the place when I informed the proprietor that I should be compelled to arrest the girl on the charge of having murdered her child. The conjoint appeals to me to let her go were most piteous, for the couple really had a strong liking for the girl, and I felt more than sorry myself that I should have to be the means of securing the poor creature's arrest, although her crime was an unusually desperate one, she having cut up her child of three years of age in pieces, stowed the portions away in a deal box hid in the hay-loft of a farmstead near to Blankville, and decamped. I conveyed her to Bow Street, and after seeing her safely locked up and provided with a supply of food for the night, I reported myself to headquarters, and attended at the court the next morning, when she was brought before the magistrate and remanded.

The day of Suzanne Ricord's extradition at length arrived, and I fetched her from the House of Detention for transition to France. She seemed in remarkably good spirits considering. We reached Dover all right, and made ourselves as comfortable as we could on the boat, but before we had gone far out, Suzanne became ill, and I found it necessary to take her on the top deck for fresh air. I have

always made it my practice when conveying prisoners across the Channel to inform the captain of the vessel of their presence for fear of any accident. Suzanne and I sat down, when shortly afterwards a gentleman approached me—and interrogatively said, “I wish you would tell me all about the murder by this woman.” I asked him, “How he knew she was charged with murder?”—as I object always to the prisoners being talked about by passengers, particularly before such prisoners have been proved to be guilty—whereupon he remarked that the captain had told him. I said it was a very great impertinence to question me at all upon the subject, and the gentleman then quickly departed. Shortly afterwards the captain asked me if I knew who had addressed me. I answered, curtly, “No, I neither knew nor care.” “Well,” he said, “it is Lord Hyphen,” (a name well known in the financial world). I replied, “I do not care ; you have no right to expose this poor wretch to any one’s curiosity ; it is sure to spread all over the boat.” Ten minutes afterwards, however, Lord Hyphen returned and apologised for the intrusion of his curiosity, which, he said, had been much excited, and he then entered into a conversation with both of us, generously giving Suzanne a twenty-franc piece to help her should she require it. We landed safely, and I saw the last of my prisoner when I handed her over to the care of the foreign police.

In the French papers of that period my readers will find a full account of the whole trial, which lasted a considerable time and caused a great sensation. However, through the

efforts of a young and energetic advocate, Suzanne, though found guilty, was allowed to depart without punishment, the "extenuating circumstances of the case" influencing the judge to arrive at this decision. No practical defence had been, or could be, set up, the counsel relying entirely upon the prisoner's former good character and her statement that she had been basely deceived and deserted by her lover, the father of the child, who was a soldier, and that in a moment of frenzy and excitement she had committed the dreadful deed. The French are sentimental, and Suzanne obtained her freedom.

Six months afterwards, by which time I had almost entirely forgotten the incident, I received a letter, ungrammatically written in a woman's hand, couched in most grateful language, thanking me for some kindness or other. The writer appeared to think I had laid her under an obligation, for it was signed, with many respects, Suzanne Pigou.

It was my prisoner, who, since her acquittal, had changed her name by marrying the very soldier lover who was stated to have been the cause of the murder,

A DOMESTIC TRAGEDY

THERE are few more painful shocks in life than to find one's confidence misplaced, and yet how often are we called upon to undergo the ordeal? All may seem fair and straightforward through a course of long years, but at last the day of disclosure dawns, and the wage of sin must be paid. Richard Spenser, whose history I am about to narrate, suggests this train of thought. He was, indeed, a villain, for he offended against all laws, and, alike in the sphere of business and the circle of home, he yielded to the temptations of evil. He held a good position, being the confidential cashier of a prominent merchant's house in the City. His sudden disappearance created naturally much consternation, and this was changed to virtuous indignation when it was discovered that he had carried on a systematic course of fraud. A strict examination of his books showed that for some years he had been appropriating large sums belonging to his employers. The firm were naturally very indignant, and failing to discover his whereabouts, they put the affair into the hands of the police. In consequence of my instructions, I proceeded to visit the dwelling-house of Spenser. It was a very handsome house, situated in

Camden Road, and I soon discovered that no expense had been spared in its arrangement. I obtained an interview with Mrs. Spenser, who proved to be a very superior woman. She was good-looking, polished in her style, and evidently very well informed. The unfortunate lady could give me none of the information I desired. She explained her situation to me in a simple and straightforward style. She had been greatly distressed at the non-appearance of her husband at the usual time of his return from the City, and had feared that some accident had occurred to him. Her anxiety had changed to horror and surprise when, upon presenting herself at the office in the City, she learned that he was accused of fraud. After some trouble I succeeded in obtaining a photo of her husband from her.

Some days passed, but no clue was found as to the whereabouts of the fugitive. Every effort was made, reward bills were circulated, and the usual inquiries were set on foot, but apparently to no purpose. I therefore resolved to pay a second visit to Camden Road, but this time I elicited nothing from Mrs. Spenser. She had either been warned not to compromise her husband by any inadvertent disclosure, or else she had come to the same conclusion through her own reflections. I therefore took my departure, feeling rather crestfallen. I should mention that the house was being very strictly watched, and that it was proved that no letters were being sent to Spenser or received from him. In consequence of two or three things, I became suspicious that there was another lady concerned in the case besides

the calm and dignified Mrs. Spenser, and therefore I started on a new tack. I proceeded to make diligent inquiries at the house of business in the City, and found my idea was not far wrong. It seemed that Spenser had been in the habit of receiving letters written in a lady's hand several times in the week. One of the clerks had noticed this, and "chaffed" him about it; but Spenser seemed so much annoyed that the clerk did not pursue the subject. The post-mark was "N.W."

During the investigations that had been made Spenser's desk and his belongings in the City had, as a matter of course, been looked over by the head of the firm, but I deemed it advisable to have a turn at them myself. My search was not altogether fruitless, for in the breast pocket of his office coat I found an envelope containing a photo. It was that of a young child, a pretty little creature, about two years old. Some people might say this was not much of a find, but, notwithstanding, I placed it securely in my pocket-book. I then paid a third visit to Camden Town. Mrs. Spenser was as reticent as ever, but I soon found a talisman to change her stately, cool manner. After a short conversation I produced my "find," saying, "This is your child, I presume, madam?" (I must say here that I knew she had no children.)

During my extensive experience I have seen many men and women "staggered," but I was not prepared for the awful look—I can use no other term—that came over the woman's face. She hissed rather than spoke the word;

“Where did you get this?” I told her all I knew about it, and added the painful intelligence that her husband for some time past had been in correspondence with another lady. She rose up and, coming towards me, said emphatically, “If that is so, I will help you by every means in my power.” She then described his dress, personal appearance, habits, &c., and I left, promising to return soon. I knew Spenser had not left the country, as we had watched all the ports.

I lost no time in prosecuting my inquiries, and before very long I was rewarded by obtaining a clue. Naturally, I had directed special attention to the task of eliciting any information which I could obtain from the defaulter's fellow-clerks about his movements, and I discovered that one of them had on one occasion walked with Mr. Spenser as far as the Avenue Road. This was a hint which was well worth following up, and accordingly I proceeded to investigate that district. It is needless to say that I could not at once discover what I sought for, but patience and perseverance are virtues much needed by detectives, and presently I established to my own satisfaction that a certain Captain and Mrs. Effingham, who were living in the Avenue Road, could be no other than my friend Mr. George Spenser and the lady who was supposed to be his wife. But, notwithstanding this important discovery, my difficulties were by no means over, for when I tried to obtain admission I found that the house was

closed and that the occupants had, so their neighbours supposed, betaken themselves to the country.

The next day I paid another visit to the real Mrs. Spenser, and I was surprised and startled to see the change that had passed over her in so short a space of time. The beautiful face was completely altered, and the traces of acute mental suffering were only too plainly visible. She could not, indeed, repress all outward evidence of the tumult which raged within, and during our conversation she paced restlessly up and down the room. Mrs. Spenser told me that she had been looking over her husband's papers to see if she could gain any information as to his movements, and she had ascertained from some letters which she found in his desk that he had been in communication with house agents in several parts of the country. She handed these papers over to me, and while I was carefully looking over them I came across one which immediately attracted my attention. It was a description of a house, which possessed all the attractions so liberally attributed by advertisers to the dwellings under their charge, and it was said to be "beautifully situated in the New Forest." It struck me directly that my friend Spenser would probably choose a very quiet spot in which to await events, and where could he find a more secluded locality than the wilds of the ever delightful New Forest? There was no doubt that Spenser would have sufficient means to establish himself in seclusion for a few months, for he had robbed his employers of a very

large sum of money, all of which he, no doubt, had about him at the time.

Possessed, as I thought, of this clue, I went down to Hampshire and began my search for the house. It was not very long before I succeeded in finding it. It was situated in a quiet, retired spot, and was, in fact, a charming place, which seemed to indicate peace and rural felicity, untroubled by the darker shadows and storms of life. Yet it covered a double tragedy, the ruin of a woman's happiness and a man's reputation. I made some inquiries in the vicinity, and learned that a lady, a gentleman, and one child were living at the house in question. They had taken the house furnished for a term of three months, and had arrived there only a few days before my visit. From the description which I obtained of them I was sure that the occupant of this rustic paradise was the culprit of whom I was in search, but I thought it best to act with prudence. I despatched a telegram to Mrs. Spenser, and awaited her appearance with as much patience as I could command. She did not keep me long, but arrived the very next day. Accordingly, I marched up to the house with my warrant, accompanied by Mrs. Spenser, who was still in the same state of intense, but suppressed, agitation, which gave her manner a peculiar quietness. I greatly feared a scene, for I thought the tension was too great, and that she would surely break down at the sight of her faithless husband. I gained admission to the house by a stratagem such as we are often compelled to use in order to confront those who

have too much reason to refuse to see us. When I came face to face with Mr. "Effingham," I explained to him that I had a warrant for his arrest. Before he had recovered from this shock, Mrs. Spenser, who had kept in the background at first, came into the room. Her guilty husband started and turned deathly pale. I have no doubt the spectacle of his wronged wife was more terrible to him at that moment than the presence of the officer of the law. He could say nothing, but gazed at her as if bewildered. Mrs. Spenser was likewise silent, but she looked at him with an expression of the bitterest contempt. Her face changed a little when the crying of a child was heard, and the door burst open, admitting a young and pretty woman, who rushed up to my prisoner and flung her arms round him, crying and lamenting with the most passionate sorrow. Poor young thing! she was indeed to be pitied, for she had been the dupe of Spenser's treachery no less than the aggrieved wife. She had never dreamt that her supposed husband was really the husband of another, so that she had at once to make the terrible discovery, not only of his offence against the law and of the ruinous consequences which it would too probably entail upon her and her child, but of his offence against herself, a greater and a graver one in a woman's eyes. It was a most painful moment, and even I, accustomed as I am to scenes of distress and startling revelations, felt it acutely. I was anxious to bring it to an end as speedily as possible, and I therefore told Spenser that I must take him at once to London.

He made no resistance, knowing, I suppose, that it was useless. Mrs. Spenser maintained her reserve, and walked out of the house, merely saying, "I will see you in town." The conclusion of my story will take my readers by surprise, for, old stager as I am, I must confess that I was at fault in my predictions of the finale. Spenser was charged and remanded, and we all fully expected that a long term of imprisonment would have been his fate. To our great mystification, the firm withdrew from the prosecution, and the case collapsed. The cause of this change of tactics was that Mrs. Spenser had pleaded so earnestly for mercy to her husband that his employers had consented to abandon their intention of prosecuting according to the utmost rigour of the law. I afterwards received a private letter from Mrs. Spenser, in which she thanked me for my kindness and explained her apparently inconsistent conduct. It seemed that the sight of the little one whose photo had so enraged her had wrought the change in her feelings. Upon leaving the house in Hampshire, she found she had some time to wait before the departure of the next train for London. She, therefore, strolled in the village and came across a child who had gone astray. She was fond of children, and took the little thing in her arms to soothe it. She became quite interested in its prattle, when the nurse hurried up delighted to find her charge in safety. "Mrs. Effingham would have been in a way if I had gone back without it," she said. Here was a revelation for Mrs. Spenser! She hurried off to the station; her feelings of

revenge had died away ; that innocent little dear should not be pointed at as a felon's child. She added that she should consider Spenser as dead to her, and that he had better go out of the country with the woman he was evidently attached to. Mrs. Spenser acted on this idea. She very naturally refused to see her husband again, but spared no pains to assist his departure in every way. Spenser certainly fared better than his deserts ; his wife was truly as noble a woman as I ever met with. I must add, in conclusion, that I met her again a short time since. She was still as handsome and as calm in manner as when I first saw her, but on this last occasion she was dressed as a widow, and a shadow rested upon her face. Her great sorrow has not embittered her, for she is a woman well known in works of charity. In relieving the wants of others she has found the best solace for her own grief, and is deserving of all respect and sympathy.

A MYSTERY.

ON the occasion of the arrival of one of the P and O. boats, homeward bound from Australia, at Naples one day, there was considerable hubbub among the officers and crew when it was discovered, just after the vessel had "lifted" anchor and was speeding away from the bay, that a smart, gentlemanly young fellow, named Curtis, one of the midshipmen, had "deserted ship," having, as he himself grumblingly and tersely put it, "had quite sufficient to satisfy anybody." It was only the "return home" of the young man's first voyage, but even this short experience had proved enough, if not more than enough, to disgust him with the prospects, when reduced to actual practice, of a seafaring career. "A life on the ocean waves," particularly when those waves were anything but smooth ones, was evidently not the life—as he discovered after his short trial trip—for him.

He was a high-spirited youth of very good family, his father being a member of a large and important firm of Government contractors, well known in the south of England, and having got into a number of "scrapes" at home, it was thought that a short apprenticeship on board

one of our good liners—where things, though well disciplined, are nevertheless comfortable for those who like to accommodate themselves to the duty—might perhaps cool down somewhat the ardour of his young days, and steady him a little bit. He was, personally, very much opposed to the arrangement, and took every possible opportunity upon every possible occasion to show his dislike to the career which had been marked out for him by others. His tastes were horses, his parents' ideas were commerce; result, as too often happens, unwilling to sea. Before he had been on the ship twenty-four hours he was in trouble, wouldn't work, and wouldn't do anything he was commanded to do. We may be sure this sort of thing doesn't last long in the P. and O. service, and the upshot of this was that "Mr. Captain" took him in hand and showed him, in a practical and forcible manner (just such a manner as captains have when provoked), that he would have none of this "darned sort of nonsense," and told off a couple of reliable seamen to look after him and make him work, making the lad's existence so irksome that he took the very first opportunity of getting away; hence the discovery of his absence, as above indicated.

The youth found himself at Naples with only just sufficient money in his pocket to telegraph home for further funds, to be sent off at once, under the plea and pretence that he had been taken seriously ill, requiring expenses to cover medical attendance and to frank him to London, and stating that until he received pecuniary relief he was obliged

to lay up there. The father rose to the "bait," and authorised a Neapolitan banker to place at his son's disposal the sum of fifty pounds.

This was just what the young rascal, who straightway made his way to Paris, living *en prince* there for a few days, wanted, and a fine time of it he had. However, there is an end to everything, and Master Curtis found himself in a very few days getting rapidly towards the end of his financial tether—in fact, with only just sufficient to pay for a third-class through ticket to London, for whence, as I afterwards discovered, he left, departing from the Gare du Nord at six o'clock one evening, expecting to arrive at Calais for Dover by twelve the same night.

In the meantime, his parents were greatly exercised and alarmed by not hearing from their son in any shape or form, for he had not even acknowledged direct to them the receipt of the cash, and when the father, as a last resource, telegraphed to the banker to make inquiries respecting the straying youth, the proprietor of the hotel the lad had stayed at until the money was paid over to him, could not say anything about him beyond that he had discharged his bill and departed, but whereto he had not the faintest idea.

Some time passed, and things were getting very serious indeed, particularly as a special messenger had been despatched to Naples, and who returned without in any way clearing up the mystery, his journey having proved entirely fruitless.

Foul play of some kind—robbery, or perhaps even murder—suggested themselves, everybody being at their wits' ends to account for the strange disappearance.

It was during this period of suspense that the father came for advice, and, if possible, for help, to Scotland Yard, gave all the particulars he could, left a photograph, and in addition described several personal and recognisable peculiarities his son possessed, shortly afterwards leaving the office almost heart-broken, fearing the worst, the missing lad being an only child.

Scotland Yard communicated at once by telegraph with the Neapolitan authorities, but no trace of the youth could be found there, and little else apparently could be done.

The next day to the one upon which the father's sad tale and instructions were received, I was given a telegram then just handed in, coming from the Calais police, wherein it was stated "that the body of a young Englishman, evidently dead for some days, had been found near to that place ; whether murder or suicide had taken place they were not sure, and requesting an English officer to go over to assist investigation. It had been found necessary to bury the remains."

This sounded rather like the confirmation of Mr. Curtis's dread suspicions, and he was at once communicated with.

One would naturally suppose that the sending off of an English police officer in an important case of this kind would

be a very easy matter indeed ; the delay at the most seeing the official in the next departing train upon his journey. Oh dear no, bless you. They cannot do things like this in England. You don't expect, reader dear, that you pay your rates and taxes to ensure promptness in matters like these, however important they may be, do you? Because if you do, you are likely to be very much disappointed. An ordinary individual, a rate-paying citizen, a business-like Metropolitan, would jump into a cab, book to Calais, look into things, be back again, satisfying himself concerning them, and all within a dozen hours or so at the very most ; but with the police, who ought almost to outvie the fire brigade in smartness and promptness, it is a far, far different thing, and you will scarcely credit it that what with Scotland Yard and the Home Office and Calais, and the Home Office and Calais and Scotland Yard, and Calais and Scotland Yard and the Home Office, papers to be signed here, papers to be sent there, papers to be brought back, papers to be taken away again, papers to be re-signed, papers to be counter-signed, and Providence alone knows what else besides—a species of red-tapeism at once irritating and senseless, a needless circumlocution, which makes every fair and business-minded man scrunch his teeth in the midst of it, fully fourteen days were taken up before I was “officially” despatched to make the required investigation. Mr. and Mrs. Curtis, of course, had preceded me immediately upon the result of the intelligence being made known to them, and there they were at Calais, patiently or impatiently,

waiting my long-expected arrival. The body having been buried, it could not be exhumed for identification without the necessary authority, which authority was being manufactured or constituted by the fourteen days' "dance" just described.

Well, I at length reached Calais, and the exhumation left no doubt as to the body being that of young Curtis. It had been interred in a very roughly made coffin; the coat and vest were missing, but all the other clothes were there, it being the custom to bury the poor unfortunates who were found dead in that country in a very rough-and-ready fashion—indeed no post-mortem being held, and the notes taken for the purpose of identification wretchedly incomplete. We found a very large deep wound—the skull being broken right through—on the top of the head, exhibiting every indication of great violence having been used.

I made a careful entry of every scratch or wound which I discovered upon the body, which was eventually decently and plainly reinterred in a more suitable place than that of the waste ground or common which appeared to have constituted his burial-place. Mr. and Mrs. Curtis returned to England.

It required a little tact and trouble to solve this sad affair, and to track down, if possible, the culprits or wrong-doers. And here I must take the opportunity of thanking my friend, a well-known London solicitor, whom I accidentally met in Calais at the time, for the great assist-

ance he rendered me in this case by his intimate knowledge of all legal matters of an international character where crime is suspected. My first move was to Paris, to the Gare du Nord. I recollected that nearly a month had slipped by, and detection was every hour becoming more difficult—and there, after an endless amount of trouble, I obtained the dates of all the third-class through tickets to London issued within the past four weeks, and, in addition, secured the names of the guards of the various trains, interviewed them, finding one out at last who remembered a young Englishman, travelling in the company of two others of the same nationality, corresponding somewhat to the description I gave of Curtis. He remembered him because Curtis had seemed excited and evidently the worse for drink. He thought he could recognise his travelling companions, and gave me a very intelligent account of them, further adding that he felt sure he had on more than one occasion seen the two men travelling that journey. I worked the line right down to Calais and St. Pierre, which is close to it, inquiring at every station on the journey, and confirming in many important particulars the details already obtained. By the time I reached Boulogne I had secured quite a formidable amount of information, quite sufficient, in fact, to enable me to give pretty clearly to others the description of the men I wanted, and then at Boulogne station I got the ticket-collector, who felt sure he could swear to the identity of the persons. I followed up the track, and finally, to make a long story short, found both men,

one at Northampton and the other at Newcastle, who, however, held most respectable positions in their respective towns, and were the last in the world to be suspected of any outrage or crime like the one I was concerned about.

I had hunted the Northampton man down first, and when I told him who I was he seemed considerably staggered, but was more so when I gave him the account of the death and the discovery of the body of young Curtis, and at once frankly admitted having travelled with him, remarking that the young fellow was entirely without funds, and that he and his Newcastle friend, whose name and address he promptly gave me, had supplied Curtis with refreshment at several stopping-places on the journey. They had rather liked the youth, who was full of anecdote and information, but considered him a bit "fast and devil-me-care." I requested this man to accompany me to the local police station to make a declaration, my inquiries of the superintendent resulting in the most satisfactory opinion as to his antecedents and position, which put the idea of any crime having been committed entirely out of my head. Nevertheless, I journeyed to Newcastle and saw the co-traveller, who I found to be a gentleman of considerable standing in the town, and also absolutely above suspicion. This gentleman seemed greatly surprised as well, for he remembered the journey perfectly—in fact, he and his friend of Northampton were in the habit of crossing to France together about four times a year on business and

had known each other since boyhood. I asked when was the last he saw of the youth, and he informed me that Curtis went on to Calais, as he was going home that way. They had got out at Boulogne. After he had thought a little while and refreshed his memory, he said, "I remember now perfectly well that when we got out at Boulogne we left our young friend by himself asleep in the carriage," and neither had heard anything more of him in any way until I made my presence known to them. He very kindly accompanied me back to his friend at Northampton. Of course by this time I was perfectly convinced of the innocence of both of them.

I found myself twenty-four hours later at Calais again, and finally cleared up all doubts in the following manner:—Curtis, I presumed, had remained asleep until the train after leaving Boulogne had actually passed Calais Station some distance, when, suddenly awaking, he went to look out of the window, and, leaning against it, was shot out on to the line and thus killed. I proved my surmise by obtaining from the Newcastle gentleman the information that he had, when leaving the carriage, omitted to fasten the door, and the railway porters at Calais had also failed to do so—for I even obtained the number of the carriage and was able to identify it. A walk down the line to the large curve near to St. Pierre and a careful examination of the rails set the matter entirely at rest, for there I discovered several large stains and some of Curtis's hair on the

outside of one of the chairs which fastens the rail to the sleeper.

* * * *

Anyone visiting St. Pierre can verify the truth of this story for themselves, for there, in the little churchyard close to the village, is to be seen a neat plain headstone, with the name of "Robert Curtis" carved thereon.

A SHARP TRICK.



IN one springtime of some years back I was brought into contact with a gang of "swell mobsmen" who had on many occasions successfully obtained, by a process well known to the swindling fraternity as "ringing the changes," a large amount of very valuable property, and never in all my experience have I come across such an accomplished and audacious trio, who positively stuck at nothing to achieve their unworthy ends. To individualise these three persons, I must give my readers their names and descriptions. The first, a short, middle-aged, smooth-faced man, always neatly dressed in black, was known by his pals as "Scotch Jack." His duties chiefly consisted in—by his appearance, which was one, take it altogether, of super-respectability—giving the necessary moral weight of the apparent genuineness of any of the transactions which his confederates entered into, a very useful and necessary *rôle* to play in the department of life in which he took so active an interest. The second person was a man called "Hulton," a kind of "general utility" man, who was quite prepared, on the slightest possible provocation, to play *any* part which might be allotted to him by his companions. He was a repulsive-

looking fellow, slightly pock-marked, and always wore a considerable amount of jewellery. I should think he must have been about thirty years of age. He was very powerful, and looked rather like a well-to-do or retired publican.

The third, but the recognised chief of the "concern," was a tall, middle-aged, military-looking man, always very neatly dressed, nonchalant, of good appearance, slightly bronzed, and with a suspicion of grey asserting itself among his fine head of crisp, black hair, and to complete a decidedly *distingué* appearance, he constantly wore, with studied ease and elegance, an eye-glass. If I might compare this man—in appearance only, be it understood—he was almost the counterfeit presentment of that highly respected and popular gentleman, Mr. S. B. Bancroft, and was known to most of his unsuspecting victims, as also to the police, as "Colonel Melville." Mr. Bancroft will, I am sure, forgive me making this odious comparison when I explain my reasons for doing so, which are as follows :—Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft, in their interesting book "On and Off the Stage," give an account in Chapter XV. of some experiences they were subjected to by some persons passing themselves off as "Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft, of the Prince of Wales's Theatre," on more than one occasion. I was very much struck with this statement at the time, and a perusal of my papers has since fairly convinced me that "Colonel Melville" and a "lady"—the latter a not too virtuous barmaid from a well-known hotel in the neighbourhood of the Strand—visited Ventnor and Brighton at the dates mentioned in the book, and, owing to

the "colonel's" strong likeness to Mr. Bancroft, I have not the slightest doubt in my own mind but that it was this pretty couple who had "doubled the characters" and passed themselves off as Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft. I have tried to positively verify my suspicions, but as the "barmaid" died about eighteen months ago, and the "colonel" still "languishes" in prison, I have not been able to obtain that evidence which would set any doubt, if any at all exists in *my* mind, which it doesn't, upon the matter, entirely at rest. As I have already said, I feel sure that not only will Mr. Bancroft forgive me for drawing this comparison, but he will be equally interested, as I am, in the fact that, after all the lapse of time since the "impersonation" took place, some little information has at length been unearthed as to the incident, which caused him no little inconvenience and annoyance at the time.

It is perhaps needless for me to say that "Scotch Jack," "Hulton," and "Colonel Melville" were thoroughly hardened reprobates, all of whom had on more than one occasion occupied quarters in various prisons, both in London and in the provinces, and at the period I write of, "Hulton" was a ticket-of-leave man, having just obtained his freedom from seven years' incarceration for burglary in the neighbourhood of Nottingham. Still even this did not deter them, for they played for high stakes, and in the most business-like manner always contrasted the risks with the probable gains, determined to carry out their nefarious transactions to a successful issue if possible, and the three

characters, although well-known to Scotland Yard, seemed to care about as much for that fact as they did about the several terms of punishment they had respectively undergone, and they continued to pilot their little "games" with a coolness and skill exceptionally remarkable, even with all their varied experiences.

So well known were these men to the police authorities that when any robbery or misdeed of a kind denoting an extra amount of 'cuteness in its execution took place, the first people watched or visited were "Scotch Jack," "Hulton," and the "Colonel," in order to see how far these gentry had incriminated themselves in the particular case claiming the authorities' attention. Personally I was very early made acquainted with the trio and their ways, and deeming it prudent to always possess something of the knowledge of their movements, either directly by my own investigations, or indirectly through my "informers," I was generally in a position, given a few hours' notice, to place my hands upon any one or all of them.

One day a well-known jeweller in Bond-street came to the "Yard" and gave the particulars of a robbery which had taken place, in which both he and his stock-in-trade were the sufferers, and which I here relate.

It happened that one afternoon, about three o'clock, a gentleman drove up in a hansom to the shop and asked for various articles—bracelets, rings, &c.—to be sent, in the course of an hour or so, for his selection and approval, to a certain hotel in Brook-street, close by, explaining that,

as he was in a hurry to transact other business, he could not make the selection there.

This sending on approval is a very common, in fact, almost everyday transaction, and, therefore, caused no feeling of alarm in the heart of the worthy shopkeeper ; in fact, that gentleman appeared only too willing to oblige a probable customer, for it was " off season " at the time, and purchasers had been few and far between for a considerable period preceding the call of the stranger.

A very strong, handsome leather case, generally used for this purpose, was brought into requisition, and carefully packed with, roughly speaking, about three thousand pounds worth of very choice diamond and ruby mounted articles which were considered most likely to meet the requirements of the gentleman wanting them, and these were despatched punctually to the minute to the hotel, in the care of the manager of the shop, an astute individual, who, for additional security's sake, was accompanied by the proprietor's son, a strapping athletic young fellow of about twenty-two.

" Is Colonel Melville within ? " said the manager at the window of the " inquiry office."

" Yes, sir, he has just gone up to his room. I will send him word that you wish to see him," said the office-keeper, knowing the manager, who had been there often enough waiting on other customers, well.

" Thank you."

" Mr. Harbert," said the manager presently, in a confi-

dential tone, to the young man at the desk, "do you know anything of Colonel Melville?"

"No; he seems all right though; been here about a month, and pays his bills regularly; has a private room and a valet," responded Mr. Harbert.

This satisfied the manager, who, it must be confessed, was a suspicious, shrewd sort of a character, and he and the jeweller's son sat down on the seat in the large hall, provided for the use of callers, and waited the "colonel's" pleasure, which was intimated to them in a few minutes, by the valet making his appearance, and addressing them with the words:

"Are you the gentlemen from Mr. Rubistone's, of Bond Street?"

"Yes."

"Please follow me; Colonel Melville will see you."

In a very comfortably-furnished room both the men were ushered into the presence of the "colonel," who was at that moment busily engaged in writing at an escritoire in a corner by the window.

"The gentlemen from Mr. Rubistone's," said the valet, who thereon quietly left the room.

"Excuse me for a moment, gentlemen, whilst I finish this note, and pray take a seat," said the colonel, in a courteous and polished manner.

In a few moments the colonel had completed his writing, and, turning round in his chair and facing the manager and his companion, said, "Now, if you please, I will see what

you have got. I have an only daughter," continued the colonel, "who comes of age next week, and I wish to make her a decent present of some kind, and my friend, Sir Henry —— (giving a well-known name), with whom she is staying now, recommended me to your establishment as being the most likely place to find something uncommon."

The manager bowed, unlocked the case, and spread the glittering contents on the *escritoire* for the "colonel's" inspection.

After a considerable time had been spent in looking over them, the "colonel" selected a pair of earrings, a bracelet, and three rings, and upon inquiring the price was told eight hundred guineas, at which he expressed surprise, as he did not wish to go above five hundred pounds. However, after a little parleying and judicious bargaining he was told that seven hundred and twenty pounds would purchase them, which price he agreed to pay, and taking a cheque-book from a drawer, wrote out a cheque, payable at Drummond's Bank, for the amount, and handed it to the manager, who had by that time put the remaining articles back into the case.

"I am afraid," said the manager, deprecatingly and hesitatingly, "that I cannot accept——"

"Ah," said the "colonel," interrupting, "I didn't think of its being my first transaction with you. Of course, you cannot allow me to have the goods before the cheque is 'cleared,' therefore I shall anticipate that by letting you take the articles back with you to send on direct to my

daughter," whose address he gave, care of the well-known Sir Henry ——, who resided at a magnificent place in the North of England. "By the time you have insured and packed them you will have been able to have the cheque passed through your bankers."

"But," said the "colonel," rising from his seat, "if I can find you a small cardboard box, I would prefer you packing them here before me, so that I can seal the parcel myself and know then that its contents will not be tampered with, stones changed, and all that sort of thing, eh?"

"Certainly, sir," said the manager accommodately, and who was now thoroughly impressed with the *bona fides* of his customer.

A little hunting about soon secured a flat white wooden box, about a foot long and some three inches in depth and breadth; in a few minutes the chosen articles were very snugly laid in layers of cotton-wool, which the manager took from his own leather case for the purpose; some string procured, and tied firmly round it; all it then wanted was the sealing.

Looking first in one drawer, then another, the "colonel" apparently could not put his hand upon a piece of sealing-wax. He therefore went and pulled the bell violently, which, not being answered quickly by his man, caused him to impatiently remark, "Confound that fellow! he is never here when I want him." During this time he had, as though unconsciously, placed the box under his right arm, and was walking about the room with it, looking first in one place

and then in another for sealing-wax ; at last, evidently in a temper, he seized hold of the handle of the door, and, pushing his body partly out of the room, called out loudly for his valet, who immediately came to the door and apologetically remarked, " I am very sorry, sir, to be so long answering the bell, but a lady and gentleman are downstairs waiting for you in the ante-room, and wish to see you."

" Well," said the " colonel," snappishly, " I shall be disengaged in a minute. Bring me some sealing-wax at once." At this moment he, to all appearances, *accidentally* let the box drop just outside the door, but hastily picked it up again and came into the room with it, followed by the valet with the sealing-wax.

" I hope my so carelessly letting the box fall has not damaged the contents, Mr. Manager," said the " colonel," shaking it close to his ear as if listening to the rattling of the contents.

" Oh, no, sir," responded that urbane individual, " it is too securely packed for that, sir."

Carefully sealing the string in several places, the colonel handed the package to the manager with the cheque and a smile, saying, " Now, remember, the birthday is next Thursday ; you have plenty of time to insure and despatch it, besides waiting for the cheque to come round ; and I would not for the world that the parcel should be late in reaching my daughter."

The manager thereupon bowed, thanked the " colonel," took up his hat, and, accompanied by his companion, de-

parted, feeling mightily pleased with the good "stroke of business" he had done; when he got back to the shop the box was placed in the safe, and the cheque posted on to the bankers, but in forty-eight hours it was returned, marked "no effects."

Well, the reader will perhaps say, what did this matter, the box of jewellery was there all right in the safe. Yes, this was exactly what the proprietor, his son, and the manager thought until they opened it a few days after, not having heard anything from the "colonel" respecting the affair, when they found, not the earrings nor the bracelets, nor the rings, but several small pieces of coal, carefully packed in tow.

The fact was, that when the box dropped on the floor behind the door, the "colonel" took the opportunity of changing it for another, which had been placed there by his confederate, the valet, and which was the one which was eventually so carefully sealed up.

It was, I must admit, very cleverly done, but the "colonel," who was no other than the chief of the "thieving three" I described at the outset, is suffering for this and many other things "too numerous to mention," by undergoing a period of penal servitude. I arrested him shortly after I got the information from the jeweller, but the valet, "Hulton," getting scent of my pursuit, got clean away together with "Scotch Jack," since dead.

AN INTERCEPTED ORDER.



A FENIAN EPISODE.

IT has been my lot, luck, experience, or whatever it might be termed, to have had to deal with, in many different ways, the doings of Fenians, and a very large number of startling incidents could I relate of the manœuvres of the lawless individuals composing this body, which for a great many years has held such a terrible sway in the regions of political matters—that is, if political matters can, which I doubt very much, possibly be associated with the ruffianism and blackguardism exhibited by the gangs who have banded themselves together under the flag of Fenianism.

I, in my humble opinion, take it that where a wrong is known to exist, it is the bounden duty of every law-abiding person who wishes his country well, to agitate by all the powers (legitimate ones, of course) to get that wrong righted; but when that agitation is taken advantage of by some of the off-scourings of society, and made the excuse for the preaching of sedition, the practice of the assassin's dagger

and the dastard's dynamite, I, with thousands of others, who on general principles sympathise with the sufferers of faulty legislation, or whatever it is, say, with all emphasis, that there the line should be drawn, and the same energy which is displayed in the attempt to rectify the weaknesses of any particular system should at once be exerted to suppress, at any time, and at any place, and upon any occasion, any tendency to the cowardly lawlessness and the villainous proceedings which have hitherto distinguished the work of those who seek to undermine the constitution by the means of gore and gunpowder. Nothing can possibly be more contemptible, nothing more brutal, nothing more loathsome, than, that under the excuse of patriotism or the guise of politics, innocent lives should be ruthlessly sacrificed, valuable property destroyed, and treason indulged in for the sake of gratifying the lusts of a few—a mere handful at the most—of those outcasts who, on any occasion necessitating the spilling of blood and the spoliation of homes, seem always ready to come forward and take the dirty and horrible work in hand.

I do thoroughly believe this, and I am solemnly writing now with a personal knowledge and experience of a large number of Fenians, which include Stephens, Byrne, Tynan, Coleman, Mooney, and others of the so-called, but wrongly termed, “advanced party”—scoundrels, whom every honest man's gorge must, when their iniquitous proceedings are remembered, rise at—that when the exact facts of the unpleasant matters now before justice and the country are

elicited, no one more than true Irishmen themselves will regret that their beautiful country should have been the cause of so much that is guilty and reprehensible. For obvious reasons I cannot enter more clearly into the whys and wherefores of the agitation, nor can I proceed to deal with any portion of the subject just undergone inquiry ; indeed, at the present moment I feel my elbow nudged by the gentleman writing my experiences, and who is looking at me with a look suggestive of reproof, which as plainly as possible expresses, "Don't you think you have gone quite far enough already?" and as my proper province in these columns is to relate and not to opionate, I will take to heart the warning glance and proceed with my narration.

I was in Paris at the time, watching on behalf of our Government a number of well-known men who had, more or less, taken part in the various outrages which from time to time formed some of the most startling horrors this country has ever been furnished with. I had one man in particular to look after, and to whom I devoted the greater part of my attention, as per instructions from the "Yard." He had recently arrived in Paris, having left London (fortunately for himself), at a very short notice indeed, finding the police had just got upon his track, and were within an ace of arresting him. He, owing to the temporary rupture of England's extraditionary arrangements with France, was, of course, going about visiting his former "chums" in Paris without any cause for fear at all, feeling

perfectly secure in the asylum which that city at that time afforded.

He was a powerfully built man, originally a mechanic, but one of the most brutal-looking fellows it has ever been by misfortune to come across, and had a very unwholesome pedigree. He was wanted for more than one offence, and, to escape the hands of justice, left England some years before the date of my re-acquaintance with him, and went to America. There he joined the O'Donovan Rossa party, and after a time was despatched by that gang to visit this country again, to carry out certain infamous transactions which I should not be wise in making known here.

We will call this man "Johnson"—that was not his real name, as I have a special reason that it should not at present appear.

What Johnson did at Paris, and how he conducted and occupied himself during his residence there, are told in a very few words. He did just what his fellow-conspirators did, engaged in all the devilish work he could possibly place his hands in, in order to carry out the infernal schemes he had in contemplation. Personally baffled by the English authorities, he sought by every means in his power the opportunity of corresponding with those he had left behind, in the hope that, after all, effect might be given to his plans. I followed him about in various disguises, and took a great amount of trouble to keep myself thoroughly *au fait* with his movements, and, after about three weeks' close observation, made the discovery that he was engaged in a correspondence,

a pretty voluminous one, with some person in London, letters being received by him, care of "Poste Restante," pretty frequently, but how to intercept these communications and to make myself acquainted with exactly what was going on, was not a very easy matter.

One day, however, I made bold enough to go to the post office and ask, in French of course, for "Mr. Johnson's" letters. The official in charge of the particular department stared at me when I made the request, and remarked, "Why, *you* are not Mr. Johnson." This was rather a staggerer for me, and I felt a little foolish, but, however, managed to blurt out, with all the coolness I had at my command, "No, Mr. Johnson is not very well to-day, and has *sent me* for his letters." Eyeing me still more closely, the official handed me no less than five communications, all bearing the London post-mark, upon which I rather eagerly made for the door, feeling highly gratified with my success, when, to my surprise and horror, who should I meet face to face, but Johnson himself. Of course, he did not in the least know who I was, but, all the same, it "flabbergasted" me not a little, the suddenness and unexpectedness of his appearance taking me quite unawares, particularly as I knew him to be a desperate character, who had proved himself a very tough one to tackle on more than one occasion, one who would stick at nothing to achieve any particular ends he might have in view—a great hulking fellow who could easily have twisted me up almost into knots had

he chosen to do so—yet here was I, brought right into the very teeth of this huge unmerciful brute, perfectly unarmed, not even a walking-stick with me, with his letters actually in my hand, but which, on his appearance, I had sufficient presence of mind left to me to turn the addresses downwards, so that they might not attract his attention. In less than half a thought I grasped the situation, and quickly recovering myself from the shock which the unanticipated sight of Johnson caused, I turned round and hastily went back to the official who supplied them to me, and throwing the letters down upon the counter, remarked in a tone of simulated anger :

“These are not the letters I want.”

“Well, whose *do* you want?” said the man.

“I want the letters addressed to Mr. *Edward* Johnson. These are addressed to Mr. James Johnson.”

“We have none for any one of that name,” surlily replied the official ; who, catching sight of Johnson, who by that time had himself got up to the counter, remarked half apologetically, as he handed the letters to that worthy, “These must be for you, sir.”

“Yes,” growled Johnson, taking them up ; and, with a most quizzical searching glance at me—which I managed to bear very well, having thoroughly made up my mind as to the part I should play—he remarked, “When you come for letters for your master, young man, you should be sure that you get the right ones before you leave the counter.”

I begged his pardon in the best French I could command, raised my hat, and went away, not altogether pleased or displeased with the result of my work so far, but extremely glad that I had not aroused his suspicions. I rushed to my lodgings, put on a fresh disguise, and in half an hour or so after the occurrence I have just related was sitting in the same café as Johnson, who had gone there to peruse his letters, in company with another man, to whom he appeared to be on the most confidential terms.

I watched the pair until they left the place and went together to Johnson's hotel, where they remained, conversing and writing energetically until about eight p.m., after which they posted some letters and spent the remainder of the evening at a low café chantant in one of the suburbs about two miles and a half away. Johnson saw his friend, who got "well on" in drink, safe to his apartment in the Quartier Latin at midnight, and went home.

The next morning I put on a substitute, kindly placed at my disposal by the Paris police, for although the French authorities refused to extradite these men, they did everything in their power to assist our investigations, and proceeded to lay in wait for the friend rather than Mr. Johnson himself. About eleven o'clock he made his appearance, and visited a firm of produce-brokers in the commercial portion of the city, and there held a long conversation with some one respecting, as far as I could learn, the shipment of some goods, upon which transaction being apparently satisfac-

torily concluded, he took his departure, and joined Johnson at his hotel. This sort of thing went on almost daily for the greater part of a fortnight, and although I could all the while perceive that important negotiations were being carried out, yet actually things appeared to get no "further ahead." One feature nevertheless attracted my attention considerably, and that was, instead of Johnson himself calling for the letters regularly at the post office, the friend or companion was entrusted with the duty, which he carried out daily.

The two worked cautiously and carefully together, evidently with the view of making a "coup" of some kind, and one very noticeable fact was the increase of their English correspondence, the care of which they began to be extremely and unceasingly anxious about. At this period I found it necessary to get still further help in the work, as the anxiety of watching was beginning to tell upon me, and I was getting fagged out. The extra assistance was granted to me, and I found it a very grateful relief.

The great object I had was, at first, to try and secure some of the correspondence, and to discover its purport or intent, if possible, without raising suspicion. I puzzled my brains very considerably, because the slightest thing would have put these men upon their guard and frustrated all my endeavours. I at last hit upon the plan of contriving to get one of my assistants acquainted with Johnson's friend, which, after about a week or so he did, having met him apparently

accidentally and unsuspectedly on several consecutive mornings. They got even further than this (and, what was more to the purpose), they got upon drinking terms, and pretty regularly the pair went into a café together and had a quiet game of cards. So well did my assistant arrange matters, that one day by plying Johnson's companion with drink, drugged not a little—a morning when three letters had been received by him at the post office—he succeeded almost beyond hope in making the man irretrievably drunk, leaving him fast asleep in the café whilst he came out to inform me of the result.

We went in together to the sleeping individual, and in a very few moments I had the letters out of his pockets, opened by the aid of a jug of hot water brought to us by the garçon, copied in pencil in my note book, refastened, dried over a spirit lamp, and replaced in the drunken man's pocket, whom we left sleeping out his debauch.

The third and last letter we opened was one which even surprised me, although I had begun to think that something very unusual was going on in the Fenian world. It was worded after this fashion :—

856A, BISHOPSGATE STREET, E.C.

DEAR —,—Send the stuff packed in the hollowed-out sugar-loaves which you have been lately arranging to ship over here.

J. B.

In a very few seconds I had wired Scotland Yard, asking them to keep a watch on 856A, Bishopsgate Street, and

describing what I had discovered, and then waited the further development of matters, having caused a very careful watch to be kept upon both of the men.

Johnson was fuming greatly at the delay of his companion in not bringing his letters, and when the fellow reeled into his hotel, still suffering from the effects of his intoxication some hours after his experience at our hands, he was soundly and roundly abused by Johnson, who roughly took the letters from him, read them, and then packed his man off to his apartments in a cab, to get sober and come again to-morrow.

Before anything further was done, I deemed it advisable to take some action, and therefore paid a visit to Johnson about ten o'clock the following morning at the hotel. I sent in my name as Mr. Chambers, from Brooklyn, U.S.A., which had the effect of bringing him at once into the smoke-room, where I was sitting alone waiting for him.

In a very few minutes I explained who I was, that I had been watching him and his companion for some weeks past, and that if he had any dynamite or "stuff" to forward to London he had better not send it over in sugar-loaves, for it would fail to reach its destination ; besides this, I told him that I felt convinced that 856A, Bishopsgate Street was attracting the attention of some of my brother officers in London.

I never saw a man look more "dropped on" in all my life ; he could hardly restrain his surprise and confusion,

and never once fairly looking me in the face, he left the room without saying a single word. The next day he departed for America, taking his co-blackguard with him.

856A, Bishopsgate Street was watched but nothing came of it.

UNDER SUSPICION.

“ARE you quite sure you placed it there?”

“Positive. I laid it right in the middle of the kitchen table, stood an empty tumbler on it, and told Jane to get it changed for me. When I returned, after paying a visit, some three hours later, the note had gone, and all I could get from the servant was a flood of tears—no change, and a strong denial that she knew anything whatever about its disappearance.”

“But you say that the door leading into the yard was open, and that you were not sure whether there was any wind or not blowing. How do you know but that it might have been blown out into the yard and disappeared that way?”

“Because I know that such a thing was utterly impossible, and that idea is too silly to discuss further, and——”

“Thank you; *I* am not Jane, and I should deem it a favour if you will please listen patiently to what I am saying, then we shall probably get at some useful information.”

"I know very well she's taken it; who else *could* do? She says she never left the kitchen the whole time, and must have seen if anybody had come into the place."

"Well, madam, I will do the best I can in the matter, but I frankly tell you that I do not think the girl has taken it."

"Nonsense."

"Yes, it is quite possible it may be nonsense, but it is nevertheless my opinion, and a pretty firm one, too. Good day."

Picture to yourself, reader, a portly lady with a fiery red complexion, dressed in a fiery red gown, on a sunny afternoon in July, in the main thoroughfare of Brixton, holding a tête-à-tête with me respecting the loss of a ten-pound note which she had placed in the care of the servant some two days before.

A typical mistress, always right and never wrong; a sharp-tongued, shrewish woman—a good sort at the bottom, but full of acidity and very severe. There are a number of them in existence; they are middle-aged, generally have a comfortable income, and invariably reside in the suburbs.

I always feel heartily sorry for servants—God help them!—with a mistress of this kind, for their lives must be simply one weary round of fiercely supervised, incessant, irksome work of the "I like to keep them at it" style, and I felt particularly sorry for the servant in this case, an apple-cheeked, healthy, round-eyed girl of about sixteen, whose

appearance suggested Berkshire rather than Brixton, and who had been in her mistress's employment for only about three months.

"Well, Jane," I said to her, upon the occasion of my visit to see where she was temporarily staying with some friends, "now tell me what *do* you know about it."

"I know nothing, sir. The mistress came to me and said, 'Jane, there's a ten-pound note I want you to get changed for me at the grocer's higher up the road. When you've done washing up you can lock the door and take the key with you, as I am going out for a little while over the way;' and upon which she puts it on the table in the kitchen, and covers it with a glass. I saw it there, and then when I had finished my washing, wiped my hands, and put on my hat to go my errand, I was at a loss and quite put out because I couldn't find that note anywhere, although the glass was there all right, and when missis came back she was rarely put out, called me a "deceitful young baggage," and all sorts of things, and sent me out of the house at once with my box and things, but without any wages, a month of which were due, and if it hadn't been that I had an aunt living here at Battersea to take me in, I really don't know what I should have done or where I should have gone to," and at this Jane did considerable crying.

"Was there anybody else in the house, Jane?"

"No, sir; leastways I don't think so; there is only mistress and me living there, but——"

"Had anybody visited the house that day?"

"No, sir, I don't think so, but——"

"You were going to say something. What was it?"

"I wanted to say, sir, that missis has taken a fancy to a little boy about six years of age, very delicate, called Jimmy who is wrong in his head, sir, and comes in at all times of the day, just when he likes; but he is a quiet, harmless sort of a boy, sir, and hardly knows what he's a-doing on."

"And this is all you can tell me about it?"

"Yes, sir, everything; but you won't let missis send me to prison or anything, will you, sir?" This pleadingly.

"I don't think she will send you there, Jane; but it is a queer sort of a case, and I must confess that I cannot make head or tail of it at all."

One thing, however, I was firmly convinced of, that Jane hadn't taken it. She looked far too honest for that sort of thing, in spite of what even her suspicious mistress might think, say, or do, and I again told this latter person so the next day, when I called once more to make further investigations, as it was upon this lady's own request that the police were called in to try and trace the missing note.

"How often does the boy, Jimmy, come in?" I asked the mistress, pursuing my inquiries.

"Oh, uncertain; nearly every day."

"Was he in at all during the day you missed the note?"

"I think not. In fact, I am pretty sure of it, for I should have seen him."

"Where does he live?"

"The sixth house from here on the right."

I went, and after a lot of ringing and knocking managed to get the door answered by a thin, slovenly, pale-faced, loquacious woman, Jimmy's mother. Making known to her who I was, I asked if she remembered whether her boy was at home all Monday.

"I'm sure I can't tell you, sir; the boy is constantly coming in and out, and I couldn't say for certain. I'm a poor sort of a creature myself, sir, and, as for the boy, he's had what the doctor called 'zebrerspinningiters' (cerebro-spinal meningitis, I suppose), and never been quite what he oughter have been, sir, and——"

"Thank you, my good woman, I merely wanted to know if you could remember if the boy was at home or not on that day. Can I see him?"

"Certainly, sir. Jim-mee!" calling in the passage.
"Jim-mee!"

Presently the poor little chap came to the door, and peered anxiously at us both with a faint flicker of a smile upon his wan face.

"Well, Jimmy," I said, "here's a penny; what do you say for it?"

"He, he, he, he!" was all he remarked, as he stood looking at the coin rather vacantly.

"How old are you, Jimmy?"

“He, he, he!”

“Do you go to school?”

“He, he, he!”

I could by this time easily perceive that poor Master Jimmy was not to be considered answerable for his actions, so, taking him not unwillingly back to the mistress, I said to her :

“What does the boy do when he comes here?”

“Oh, he plays about the house, but chiefly with toys I lend him, which he takes into my little sitting-room, and amuses himself with ; but you were not silly enough to think that——”

“I am just sufficiently silly, madam, to trouble you to answer my questions in a direct and becoming manner.” I was getting very vexed with the woman.

“Oh, well then, you will probably be able to make some important discovery or other, and——” this was said sarcastically.

“I don’t know,” I said, interrupting her, “but I would like to sit in the same room with Jimmy for a time whilst he is playing with his toys.”

“Very well, you can please yourself, but I never heard of such ridiculous nonsense.”

In a little while Jimmy began to take an interest in his toys, of which a box full of them stood underneath the sofa, and I so far managed to get into the boy’s good graces to be able to play with him, and to have a good search through the toy box to see what he had there. Nothing approach-

ing a ten-pound note, however, made its appearance, and after about three hours and a half of this sort of thing I found myself no nearer its discovery than before.

To make a little more certain of probabilities, I got the lad to follow me into the kitchen, and taking a small india-rubber ball which he had been playing with, put it under a tumbler in the centre of the table and tried to make him understand that I wanted him to get it. After some trouble I succeeded in making my intentions understood to the poor little forlorn piece of humanity, and he, by standing upon his tiptoes, could just manage to reach it.

Beyond assuring myself that he might have taken the note, or at least feeling satisfied that he *could* have extracted it had he felt so inclined, I could not get, and therefore decided to pay another visit to Jimmy's mother's house, have a look round, and see what I could pick up there.

I set about the task, together with the talkative woman, who assisted me right royally by taking me all over the rooms Jimmy made use of, examining his toys and every corner most carefully to see if he had secreted anything of the kind. I gathered nothing from this, so went home, postponing further search until next day.

About three o'clock on the following afternoon, I presented myself at the mistress's house once more, who greeted me in a sharp voice, with :

"Are you not satisfied yet?"

"No," I replied, "I am not ; I want to have a few more hours with Jimmy."

The lad was there, as it happened, playing about with his toys on the floor, and in his childish endeavours had succeeded in placing them in such a position as they in his opinion would form a "garden," and had stood a flower-pot containing a dried-up shrub of some description or other right in the centre, and was dancing and crowing about the success of his performance in high glee. When I made my appearance he recognised me again, and coming forward, took my hand and led me closer to the "garden" to show it to me. After admiring it, and patting his cheek, I sat down on a chair near to and closely watched the child.

After a while Jimmy grew tired of his garden, and thought that he would make something else ; in clearing away the débris for that purpose, he accidentally knocked over the flower-pot, which broke into several pieces, and out of which fluttered a white something—not the missing note, but a printed handbill.

This was quite enough, however, to set me thinking still more closely over the mysterious matter, the result being that I got up and went to the window, where a number of other flower-pots were standing. Clutching each of the plants by the stalk, I lifted them bodily out of the pots, and closely examined each, and in one of them I found a perfect jackdaw's nest of curiosities, and to my intense delight the missing ten-pound note, which, when I showed it to Jimmy, that innocent cause of the trouble merely responded :

"He, he, he !"

The mistress could hardly believe the "find" I had made,

and was inclined, even to the very last minute, to be “nasty” over it ; but when I pointed out the very awkward position in which she had placed both herself and the servant, she put on her bonnet, her better nature asserting itself, and immediately went over to Battersea, saw Jane, made her a present of the ten pounds, took her back into her service, and there Jane has been ever since.

I write this for the purpose of pointing out that people, mistresses in particular, cannot be too careful upon whom they cast suspicion.

DEALING IN DECORATIONS.

ONE of the very many forms of vanity affecting Englishmen of a certain class consists of obtaining, at whatever risk, a "decoration." It doesn't matter the least little bit in the world what the particular decoration is, what it represents, or however incongruous to the wearer and his position, it is all the same secured, oftentimes at great cost, and worn with considerable gusto on every possible occasion.

We know these people so well, and meet them so often, that they are instantly recognised whenever they make their appearance, and many a half fan-hidden titter, many a curious smile, and many a mischievous little dig with the elbow does their advent at any social function give rise to.

It comes about something after this wise. Some man of obscure parentage, and of still more obscure education, foots the commercial ladder in an early stage of his life, and by (all credit to him for it) perseverance manages to get on the middle rungs of a comfortable competence. He may have made his money in various ways, in anything from guano to gunpowder—it doesn't matter what, it *is* made, and his independence and retirement from the trammels of business

are secured. Now this individual, instead of continuing to mix with his own people and companions on the middle rung, the climbing of which he has so successfully achieved, and remaining happy among those he has worked and struggled with, becomes restless in his idleness, and stimulated with the idea of endeavouring to reach the top, works harder than ever he worked in his life before to attain his object, and after many heartburnings and disappointments, finds even in the lapse of years of intense effort that he has got advanced at the most a few steps higher than where he left off, and where he ought to have remained contented some time previously. Why? Because the inhabitants of the upper ring recognise his bad grammar and the odour of his former occupation, and refuse to rub their shoulders with him. This is perfectly natural, and no one is to blame for it but the unfortunate ambitious one himself, who really, after all, may be a very decent fellow in his proper sphere. Man's place in society is as distinctly marked and mapped out for him as is his location in nature, and there would be less of envy, hatred, and all the rest of it were he to recognise this more fully than he does.

Well, then, what does he do when he finds his social progress debarred and his unfortunate use of the letter "h" thrown at him on every possible occasion? He mournfully and sullenly retraces his footsteps to his starting place, and gathers all that he can on the way down to bear evidence on his return that he has at least been somewhere near the regions of Vere de Vere and the aristocracy

generally, even if he has not been admitted to the intimacy of their circles. To try to give a tone to his pretentiousness, he has recourse to artifices of all kinds and of greater or less magnitude. He gives a—if he is a provincial and not a metropolitan—liberally handsome donation to the local infirmary; or, perhaps, takes upon himself the founding of an institute of some kind or other, which is greatly appreciated, but which only remains a permanent monument to remind him in the eyes and on the tongues of all the citizens that when he said “a few words” at the laying of the foundation-stone he pronounced it “hinstitute,” that little idiosyncrasy alone costing him the loss of his temporary reputation, and he is looked down upon accordingly, being “Very good people in their way, my dear, but you know we could not *call* upon them. This according to the dictum of the leading lady of the place.

What so natural, then, after a rebuff of this description, and being thwarted in attaining his desires, that he should obtain some insignia or other which might perhaps secure him at least a little distinctive celebrity, and thus enable him to pass muster—among the uninitiated at any rate—as a “bigger” personage than he in reality is? This is a very easy process indeed, and our ambitious, but unfortunate, friend salves his conscience and heals his broken dignity by purchasing and wearing a neat, though perhaps a trifle showy, “button,” which he obtained, together with a parchment “Order,” for the sum of close upon £350,

and struts it in the social "we" of his class like a peacock with a new tail.

Of course these "decorations" are not obtained without some intermediary party, for, common and worthless as they are, they are not to be found on sale in shops, nor do they, as a rule, figure in the lists at the "stores." And to come to matters at once, I may mention that a number of persons make a living by dealing in these precious things, for which they obtain in some instances almost fabulous prices from the puny, vain people who are on the look out for ornaments of this description.

Some few years ago a man who described himself as Roland Eugene Rudolph St. Maure, a Count of the Order of the Blue Cross of Austria, did a large business in these things, advertising pretty extensively in the better class mediums, and always finding a lot of vain, empty, "would-be" people ready to patronise him. In the early stages of his career I really believe he had a few (not more than four) genuine Orders to deal in, which he had for some consideration obtained from some official at the Spanish Court, and for these he obtained a very considerable price; so much, in fact, that it enabled him to push matters to the extent of professing to be able to supply almost any Order (with very few exceptions) obtainable, and his reasons for possessing this power were that his people were well-known diplomats, and through using their name any recommendation he might make would receive attention.

I remember the man well—a tall, dark, handsome fellow,

speaking remarkably good English, with some considerable, though evidently artificial, "style" about him. He occupied well-furnished chambers in Pall Mall, where he received his guests, never "on business," but always on a footing of friendship. His *saute* manners made up for the many defects a true man of the world would have, perhaps, detected in him, and to the uninitiated—his silly customers—he easily passed muster as a person of eminent social standing and in some way or other as "connected with the chief foreign Courts."

Supposing, for instance, a "customer," anxious to obtain one of the coveted Orders, wrote him asking for particulars, a reply would be sent stating that Count St. Maure could only go into the matter at a personal interview, the affair being of such a very confidential character. The gudgeon would "rise" to this, make an appointment, and duly call on the "Count" and discuss matters.

"Well, sir," the "Count" would remark after motioning the visitor to a seat, "what Order have you set your mind upon?"

"The Legion d'Honneur of France," the visitor would reply, this being the only foreign Order, in fact, that he had perhaps ever heard of.

"I am afraid I cannot manage you that just now; I have rather overdone it with applications already, and one has to be very diplomatic in these things nowadays."

"Well, I am not particular any way. What is the Order you are wearing yourself?"

"Oh, that is the Order of the Blue Cross of Austria. There are only four in existence, and it is a very difficult matter indeed to secure these; this one I inherited, being given with a small property to one of my ancestors."

"Couldn't you get me one?"

"I am afraid not; but if you will give me a month to try, and send me on a cheque for fifty guineas for preliminary negotiations, I will do my best."

"Thank you; I will. Good day."

The visitor would then depart, and in the course of a few posts would forward the cheque, and perhaps state that, having issued invitations to a dinner party on such and such a date, by which date he would like to secure the "Order," he would be glad of the "Count's" company.

The "Count" would accept, and in a postscript say that he was about to visit Austria personally in order to use every influence, at whatever cost, to secure the Order.

In about a week he would return, bringing back with him an elaborate illuminated parchment scroll packed in a neat tin case, with the rosette. These he would place in a drawer in his room, and write to his customer and inform him that his journey so far had been very successful, more so than he ever anticipated, and with some further expenditure, which ought not to be considered in an "Order" of that extreme importance and weight, the investiture could be completed. Another cheque, and another, and another would be forthcoming, for our greenhorn had plenty of money, and was not particular as to the cost so long as he

was able to gratify his ambition, until the whole amount had totalled to the very considerable sum of £500. Beyond this, even the "Count" dare not venture to ask for fear of raising objections, whereupon the wily one would say that he would duly "invest" "Mr. Greenhorn" at the dinner-party about to take place.

After the courses had been cleared away the "Count," who had made himself particularly agreeable to everybody during the meal, would rise, and, placing his right hand into his bosom in the most approved after-dinner speaking style, would beg to say that he had been duly authorised to invest their highly esteemed host with that unusual mark of favour and esteem, the "Order of the Blue Cross of Austria," for the services he has rendered to literature and to art. (This service was secured by a donation to some Austrian institute or other, nominated on the suggestion of the Count, and its acknowledgment duly made with grateful thanks by the committee), and he was proud to be the means of investing his friend with a distinction which he (the speaker) had for some humble endeavour on the part of one of his forefathers been honoured by being the recipient of, and so on; all this of course being received with tumultuous applause by the assembled guests; and Mr. Greenhorn, the deceitful being, would blushing respond, and his wife and children, who had been told nothing at all about it, would congratulate him.

The "Count," in the above, or a very similar manner, managed to palm off some hundreds of Orders of various

kinds, which were as bogus and worthless as they possibly could be, being manufactured by his "friends," who were ready confederates in the business in different parts of the continent. At last business slackened a little, when it was found that all the pettifogging people of every possible description were having these things betowed upon them almost broadcast, and when at every suburban social gathering the wearers met on every side others who had been similarly decorated.

Never at a loss for occupation, the "Count" then turned his attention to the manufacture and conferring of American and foreign Medical, Legal, and Literary degrees, at the moderate price of fifty guineas each, and great was the rush thereof for the degrees of M.D. of Alabama, the LL.D. Kissengen, and Lit. Doc. of Lucerne, and things of this kind, the scrolls of which were masterpieces of careful and elegant construction, until at last these became, through the satirical efforts of the professional press, at a very considerable discount, the bulk of the purchasers conveying them to the waste paper basket. There are still some in existence, however, in several consulting-rooms and offices I am acquainted with and could mention—and I am always heartily amused when I see them—brilliant and conspicuous examples of human vanity and credulity.

One of the victims, a young, newly-fledged lawyer, who, it must be confessed, only obtained what he really deserved, was, however, very "rusty" when he discovered that Kissengen never had a University, or the power in any way to

confer the degree of LL.D., and that the whole thing was, as he euphemistically put it, "a frost." Of course, one cannot quite say as to what he thought he was going to receive for his fifty guineas. Sufficient is it for our purpose that he thought himself very much "taken in," and as he had no reputation to lose, not having yet commenced practice, made up his mind to prosecute, and in the due course of events I was entrusted with the investigation.

My duties chiefly consisted in tracing the pedigree of the "Count," and noting his general *modus operandi*, and to do this I at once opened negotiations with him for the purchase of a degree in medicine, this being the *rôle* promising the most success that I could venture upon. I managed, with some little difficulty whilst negotiating, in getting pretty well into the man's confidence, even going so far as to suggest that as the market for Orders and diplomas was becoming very flat in England, and customers more difficult to catch every day, it would not be half a bad plan to cross the ocean and open business in the States among our 'cute American cousins, who, if I must tell the truth, are quite as vain as we are, and just as ready to bargain and pay for anything likely to bring them some temporary or permanent notice, for they are big advertisers, and the "Count" thereupon thought it was not at all a bad idea, and gave it for the next two or three weeks very serious consideration, only being interrupted in the maturing of his plans by his arrest.

The trial took place, and whatever I or anybody may have thought of the transaction he was, to the surprise of a

great many, acquitted, chiefly through the ability of his counsel, who based his defence on the fact that no fraud was proved, as the "Order of the Blue Cross" and the various diplomas were recognised creations, and several witnesses were brought over from Austria and the other places for the purpose of testifying to this, and so on, the fact of the matter being that these witnesses were the count's confederates, and they had, as one of their clever concoctions, *registered* in some way these particular Orders, diplomas, &c., themselves, and, indeed, many others, for the sole purpose of having an apparent *bonâ fide* defence if called upon at any time to exercise it. The magistrate could do nothing but express himself to the prosecutor of a very trite maxim about fools and their money, or something of that kind, and order the "Count's" discharge.

And if any of my readers at any time happen to be in a certain street, not to be named here, in the neighbourhood of Hatton Garden, they will perhaps notice a dirty low beer-shop, called the Bay Horse, or, at least, a name something like it, and kept by one Jacob Bloog, who has lived there for a number of years. Jacob Bloog is the father of "Roland Eugene Rudolphe St. Maure," Count of the Order of the Blue Cross of Austria, &c., who, when quite a youth, left the Bloog roof-tree, entered a foreign gentleman's service as valet, and from all accounts, according to his father, has done pretty well for himself, having been, as the fond parent remarks, always a very "sharp sort of a lad."

AN ARISTOCRATIC WRONG-DOER.

A FEW years ago, at the back of the Alhambra Theatre in Leicester-square, stood a well-known café and hotel, a celebrated rendezvous of a certain class of French men and women, chiefly those of the "faster" sort, who bestowed upon the place a very liberal patronage—so much so, that the proprietor, now dead, was able after a few years' work to retire in comparative affluence. Owing, however, to the "improvements" which have recently taken place in that part, the whole of the building was levelled to the ground, and not a stick nor a stone remains to remind one of its previous existence.

The landlord himself, an elderly, fat, swarthy man, a typical Parisian café-keeper, was an individual endowed with not too much conscience or rectitude, a cautious, experienced fellow withal, who took very great pains to make everything connected with his business "pay," and the means he resorted to in order to accomplish this were not altogether of the nicest description. For instance, he managed to allow dubious characters of both sexes to promiscuously

meet at his place, and so cleverly did he succeed in conducting this department that he always escaped detection. He was equally successful in his permission of card-playing and gambling to a very considerable extent, and there is no doubt that he did a big trade in smuggled goods, including wine, spirits, tobacco, &c.

The "hotel" was situate in a very narrow, short street, and the sly landlord always employed one or more trusty, reliable men as "watchers," who gave a certain signal when they thought the premises were being noticed or overlooked by any one. These men had been in his service from the commencement of his business, and were generally believed to be relatives and partners in the concern. They certainly took a greater interest in their work than any ordinary *employés* would have taken, which no doubt gave rise to the suspicion that they were in some way or other more intimately connected with the welfare of the establishment.

About the time I am speaking of there occurred a matter which attracted a very considerable amount of attention both in London and in Paris, and the proceedings assumed the importance of being one of the greatest scandals of the day. It was, that a nobleman, a member of one of the highest families in Europe—a relative of a well-known reigning monarch in fact—had been guilty of a large number of very extensive frauds, which he perpetrated in a very cruel manner and in a most heartless fashion upon innocent and unsuspecting persons.

His *modus operandi* was as follows. He would go to some

of the largest and best known house agents in Paris, and negotiate for the use of a furnished house for, say, twelve or eighteen months, and on the strength of his name and family connection would easily obtain what he required in one of the most fashionable districts, taking the precaution, however, of concluding arrangements only with those people who were letting their residences previous to touring abroad.

When once he was thoroughly installed with his secretary, butler, and a staff of servants, and perfectly satisfied that the owner had left the country, he would sell—either by private treaty or by auction, having the goods removed to some other place for the purpose—the chief, if not the whole of the furniture and valuables, pocket the proceeds, and then coolly look about for another house. This he managed to do in no less than eight different instances, in each case recklessly disposing of movables consisting of plate of enormous value, perhaps heirlooms, and other bric-a-brac absolutely irreplaceable. In this cruel fashion he desecrated the homes of many well-known leaders of society and persons of position and financial standing. Going gaily on, elated with his success in raising money, which he expended quite as quickly as he obtained it, his zeal outran his discretion, and, not content with selling the contents of a residence, must needs try and negotiate either a mortgage upon or absolute sale of the house itself, which brought him into trouble. His relatives hearing of the scandalous transactions and to save their own good names, made compensation for the losses so craftily and outrageously inflicted upon

the unfortunate and too trusting lessors, procured the nobleman's release, a little transaction which cost them close upon 400,000 francs, and persuaded him to hastily leave Paris ; indeed, going so far as to make him an allowance to keep him out of the reach of temptation.

For some time nothing more was heard of him until the Vienna papers began to make some ugly remarks concerning the doings of a "fraudulent French nobleman." The news soon became public property, and quickly reached his relations in Paris, who were just congratulating themselves upon having got so well rid of their unpleasant kinsman. Then once more commenced the "squaring" of the unpleasant affair to avoid further publicity, and some further expenditure of money was necessary.

No sooner out of the second scrape than the nobleman recommenced his operations, this time in Austria, where he obtained a large stud of horses, disposing of them almost immediately he secured possession of them. This time, even his own relatives failed him, they having become completely tired out and disgusted with his doings, leaving him to get out of the mess in the best way he could. The only course then left open for him was to quit Austria as speedily as possible and seek an asylum in some other country, and he therefore made for England, and in due course arrived in an almost penniless condition in London, and put up at the café and hotel just alluded to.

The owner of the horses was, however, not to be done, and he determined to have the delinquent prosecuted, and

with this view placed matters in the hands of the Austrian police, who very easily traced the culprit to London, and in due time made application for his arrest to the authorities here.

The landlord of the café soon discovered the position and high social standing of the refugee, and with an eye to probable profit undertook to supply him pretty liberally with cash during his stay at the place, feeling sure that he would be duly recompensed by either the man himself or some of his wealthy and well-known relatives either in France or London, whereupon the nobleman started again, on a much smaller scale of course, his extravagancies and debaucheries, mixing with all sorts of equivocal characters, spending the borrowed money recklessly, and nearly always being in a condition of maudlin insobriety.

When the authorities placed the matter in my hands and instructed me to arrest the defaulter, I immediately communicated his description to several of my "informers," male and female, who set to work to try whether they could not discover his whereabouts.

In the course of three or four days one of the women I had placed on the "look out" came to me and remarked that she felt perfectly convinced that the gentleman was not only residing at the hotel mentioned, but had evidently learned in some way or other that he was wanted by the police, because for the previous three or four days he had not been outside the door at all, but was holding "high jinks" and having a "mighty carouse" inside, intoxicated

the whole time. The woman had been into the hotel several times with a male friend, and had even got into conversation with our "man," therefore was completely convinced that he was the person wanted.

Now came the difficulty. I was personally so well known to the "watchers" and to the landlord himself, that I dare not go near the place, let alone inside, for fear of giving rise to suspicion, and I had not been empowered to force my way in and make an arrest. If I had in any way ventured to have put in an appearance even in the street, a hue and cry would have been raised, and the landlord at once put upon his guard. I thought that, under the circumstances, the best plan would be to wait patiently for a few days, when the probability would be that the "suspect" might take it into his head to come out again, and thus facilitate my being able to secure him.

This did not answer at all, for after nearly a week's patient waiting and careful watching of the people, a very large number of them going into and leaving the premises, I found myself not one bit nearer the arrest than I was before; in fact, quite the opposite, for it leaked out, in spite of all my precautions, that the hotel was being watched for some purpose or other, and this, of course, undoubtedly placed everyone on their guard.

If I could only have managed to have once got inside the place by some stratagem or other, I should then have full power to roam about the interior at my own sweet will, and to seize anybody or anything I might consider of an incriminating nature.

minatory kind—"if," there was the "rub." Nevertheless, scratching one's head and puzzling over it would not answer the purpose. Some action of some kind or other would have to be taken on my part, and that pretty soon, or the bird might be found, in spite of all my exertions, to have flown.

At last I hit upon a plan, which I duly unfolded to my superior. "It will never answer," was that worthy's remark, after he had heard my description of my intentions. "Why?" asked I. To this I could only get a dubious shrug of the shoulders, which expressed as plainly as possible, "You may think yourself a very clever, astute individual, my young friend, but it won't answer." However, I determined that I would try it on and see.

Readers may not, perhaps, be aware of the strange anomaly which exists in certain matters connected with admission to houses containing suspects; for instance, it would, although I was fully armed with the necessary papers, have been illegal for me to have attempted in any way to have forced an entrance into the hotel, although, had I once got inside, I was at liberty to do exactly what I pleased. This is on the fine old crusted principle that an Englishman's house is his castle under peculiar and certain, or, rather, to be more correct, *uncertain* circumstances.

On the other hand, the Board of Trade, through its excise officials, have full and unlimited power to *demand* admission, and, if necessary, to *force* their way into any

house or building where it may be suspected that illicit dealing in goods liable to duty may be carried on.

My method of working, therefore, resolved itself into this—if I could only persuade the excise officers that there was even a likelihood of any suspicious trade going on in spirits or cigars, or anything of the kind, I should obtain their assistance, and get the admission I so much desired. After a tremendous lot of argument and persuasion, and overcoming any amount of doubt and disinclination to suspect that anything was wrong, I managed at length to prevail upon the Board of Trade to institute a search which, to make it appear more disinterested on my part, I took great care not to divulge in any way was my own particular wish or desire in the matter. I even went so far as to make that long-winded body the magnanimous offer to accompany their officer, which, to my great delight, was immediately accepted.

The next day about noon, having satisfied myself (by causing the female “informer” to go into the hotel and make quite sure) that our friend was still in residence there, the excise officer and I paid a visit to the place, boldly walked up the three steps, and knocked at the inner, a green baize, door, which, I may mention, was always kept fastened and carefully guarded by a porter. Our appearance caused no little excitement, for the “watchers” immediately gave their signal, a low, long whistle, which at once, as I could hear through the chink of the door, was the means of creating a great amount of running backwards and forwards

and scampering to and fro. For precaution's sake I had taken a few plain clothes men with me, whom I planted in the front and back of the house, to prevent the escape of any person, particularly the man we wanted.

"What do you want?" was asked through a hole in the door covered with a small sliding panel. "Admission," said the Customs officer. "I am armed with a warrant to search your premises."

"You can't come in."

"If you do not admit me without any delay I shall force my way through," said the officer, a portly, formidable individual.

After a few moments' further delay, occupied by a confab with some one inside, the bolt was drawn, and we were admitted.

Knowing the place well, I immediately made my way to a small room off a long passage, and, without knocking, opened the door and walked in, where I found the nobleman sitting in a large and valuable fur cloak belonging to the landlord, playing cards with a group of other men.

In a very few moments I had him with me in the passage, and was, without any ceremony proceeding to take him away, when the landlord rushed out of the bar and said to my prisoner, "You must leave my coat; that cost forty guineas, and I have spent enough on you already." The coat was therefore left behind, and I conveyed my charge to Bow Street.

The nobleman was extradited to Austria, but through the

influence of his friends, who again made good the loss, got off with the penalty of a fine only, and was afterwards packed off to South America.

The excise officer, as soon as the landlord left the bar took possession of it, and quite satisfied himself as to the proprietor's illicit dealings and evasion of duties ; the man was heavily fined, and shortly afterwards he retired, and, as I have said, the whole place has been since pulled down.

TWICE TAKEN.



CHAPTER I.

“WAL, what do you want with me?”

This in that nasal twang so peculiar to our transatlantic cousins.

“I have a warrant for your arrest,” I replied, “and will trouble you to accompany me to Bow Street Police Station.”

“I guess I’d better come, then.”

“Yes, it would be as well.”

The scene of this brief conversation was a lady’s boudoir in Bayswater, and the *dramatis personæ* concerned were a barrister from Boston, named Hide, and myself.

Mr. Rankin P. Hide was a gentleman of considerable culture and some position and influence in that wonderful city, the “hub.” He enjoyed the confidence of the Bostonians to such an extent that in a very short time he occupied a leading position at the bar there, beside holding several very lucrative and responsible appointments, being advocate to no less than three important banks. He was energetic and handsome, and about the best and most tastefully-dressed American I ever came in contact with.

By these, no mean qualifications in the eyes of the *élite* of the Boston people, he had rapidly gained an entry into the highest sections of the society the city affords. In addition to this, he was no fool, and could speak well; therefore, the social honours of the place were showered down upon him with a liberal hand, particularly as he was looked up to as a rising, if not already risen, man, who might, if he had only played his cards in a fair and square game, have married well and been run for the Senate.

He was, however, wanting in moral ballast, like a great many others of these rapidly run up young men, and his chief objects in life at last became—first, the study of Wall Street prices; second, the endeavour to lead, by his devotion to the purpose, the very society which had raised him to the position he already occupied, and in every wild harum-scarum speculative scheme that was ever promoted, and in every social drum that was ever held, the name of Mr. Rankin P. Hide figured, to the decrease of his banking account and to the detriment of his practice. Still, he kept on somehow or other, and maintained for a considerable time his position as the leading financial, social, and legal “dude” of the place.

One fine morning in autumn, something closely approaching a thrill ran through the circles he had so much adorned, when it was discovered that this enterprising and attractive young man (he was only 36) had suddenly decamped, and that a considerable portion of the three banks’ funds had disappeared, an ¹, to crown all, the wife of one of the many

respected citizens had made off, and it was afterwards proved that Mr. Rankin P. Hide, advocate, barrister, or whatever he ought to be termed, with the remnant of the funds alluded to, and accompanied by the citizen's wife just mentioned, had taken steamer and crossed the "pond" to Europe, intending, no doubt, to have, in the language of his country, so unpoetical, so practical, a "bully" good time of it.

It was some time, weeks, nay months, before the Bostonians, particularly the female portion of them, fully recovered from the shock, for Hide's good looks, his style, and, above all, his dandified moustache and neatly kept whiskers, had played the very hullabaloo with quite a host of susceptible daughters and sisters, and no end of a number of impressionable and indiscreet wives. There was hardly a family in the whole of the aristocratic surroundings of the Mall but what had in some way been involved by this modern Lovelace's incursions ; and so deep (*loud* they dared not be) were the protestations against his infamous conduct, that had he ventured at any time within the year to visit Boston again, he would, in every probability, have been dipped in the bay by some of the indignant fathers, irate brothers, or outraged husbands.

He chose, as we have seen, the safer plan, and made London his residence, and for a time, until his money was all spent, he and the citizen's wife got on pretty well together ; but in the same ratio that his ill-acquired dollars were squandered, so did his affection evaporate, and after but a short time sight-seeing in England the erring Mrs. Citizen

was ruthlessly and unceremoniously packed off back to her husband in Boston, to make what terms she best could. Hide then looked round him, counted his money, and finding only about £50 in his exchequer, left the expensive hotel he was staying at, and took up his abode with a widow and her daughter, who let some of their apartments in Bayswater, in the very house, in fact, in which I surprised and arrested him for the offence which I am endeavouring to relate.

When the £50 dwindled down to £10, Hide began to get very apprehensive as to his future money supplies, and hardly knew what to do. His American legal qualifications would not permit him to practice in this country, he knew no one, and, moreover, he was not, for very good reasons, supplied with letters of introduction, and as to giving references, well, that was out of the question altogether. The only acquaintances he had made were those of the widow and her daughter, both of whom had some means—about £9,000 altogether. They were both very friendly disposed towards him, and in a very short time he thoroughly ingratiated himself into their good books. The widow saw that he was sharp and well-informed, and the daughter (a comely young woman, separated, on account of incompatibility, from her husband) could not, of course, disguise the fact that he had a very distinguished appearance and manner. From this state of things developed quite a motherly affection on the part of the widow, and a liking, producing an intimacy of a very equivocal nature, on the side of the daughter, and we may be well and thoroughly assured

that Hide lost no opportunity whatever of improving the shining hours of his newly-found friendship, and this may in all probability account for my discovering him in the lady's (the daughter's) boudoir.

But, as I remarked, he found himself blessed with the paltry sum of £10, and no immediate prospect of obtaining more, he commenced the very audacious operation of concocting a written letter of credit, duly signed, and purporting to come from one of the banks he had acted for in the States, and this he made out on a sheet of the bank's note paper, a quantity of which he had brought away with him in his writing-case. Being familiar with the various officials' names and signatures, he had no difficulty whatever in properly executing the letter. The amount he managed to obtain from one of our West End banks was £500, and with this he at once started off for Paris, giving the two ladies he left behind the excuse that he was going there on business.

Satisfied with his success at the London bank, he tried on the same game at Paris, and managed to secure £1,000. With this he returned to London, immediately paid off, and obtained a receipt for the £500 he had previously obtained, and went back to Bayswater as quietly as though nothing whatever had happened. He had, however, forgotten one thing—a most important one, too—and that was that England has an extradition treaty with France for offences of this kind, although we do not possess one with Boston, and in due time, of course, Scotland Yard was informed by the Parisian police that a man—giving a description—had fraudu-

lently obtained £1,000, and was supposed to have got away to London, and at this stage of affairs the matter was placed in my hands.

My first visits were paid to the different hotels where I thought Americans might be staying, and I found the one Hide had been located at with Mrs. Citizen some ten weeks before, and then, after an infinite amount of trouble, discovered the cabman who had taken Hide's trunks and belongings to the house in Bayswater. This house I watched most carefully for some days, but without in any way getting hold of any further clue. The fact was, that the mother had gone into the country to stay with some relations, and sent the servant away for a holiday, entrusting the care of the place to the wife of one of the men engaged upon the repainting, whilst Hide and the daughter had managed to get down to Folkestone (I learned all this afterwards, of course). After this fruitless watching, finding nothing coming of it in any shape, and no one to give me any information on the matter at all, I let it "rest," determining in a few weeks' time to try my hand again.

Therefore, a month or so afterwards, I busied myself once more in looking after Hide, and experienced no difficulty whatever in tracing him to the house. One morning, as the commencement of my story shows, I had knocked at the door, which was opened by the servant. I told her, putting a shilling into her hand, that I wanted to see the American gentleman who was staying there on very important business.

"He's not up yet, sir," the maid-of-all-work replied.

"Never mind," I said; "show me his room."

I was conducted to Hide's bed-room, but it was tenantless. "Perhaps he's gone to missus's dressing-room," said the servant; and this turned out to be the case on coming to the door of this apartment.

Tapping on the panel I heard a female voice say: "Good gracious, Rankin, what's that?" and a man replied, "I don't know."

"What do you want?" said Hide.

"Let me in; it is most important business," replied I.

"All right."

And presently I heard a swish of petticoats, and an apparent hasty departure out of the room on the part of the female, whilst Hide unbolted the door and let me in, and the short conversation described then took place.

He took matters very quietly and unconcernedly, and leisurely proceeded to dress himself with almost needlessly particular care, at which he saw me smile, thereupon he remarked that "a man can be never too well dressed wherever he might be."

In about an hour's time we left the house. I had permitted Hide to have some breakfast and to take his farewell of the lady, who came out of the bed-room for that purpose. She appeared very much agitated and cut up at my uncere-
monious procedure, but after a while looked brighter, and asked me a whole lot of questions about the matter.

Hide accompanied me to Bow Street, and after the usual dilatory proceedings, to which I am glad the public attention

has been lately drawn through the medium of the press, I took him over to France, delivering him to the usual authorities there, and then I concluded I had seen the last of him—at all events, for a time.

But one night, some three months afterwards, to my intense surprise I saw both Hide and the lady having some supper together in one of the well-known cafés in Oxford Street. They had apparently been to the theatre, for they were both in evening dress, and the lady had an opera-glass and a programme on the table beside her. I had looked in the café on account of another case which had been placed in my hands, and these twain were the very last in the world I expected to set eyes on. Hide immediately caught sight of me and beckoned me to him. I went to the table and sat in a chair opposite to them, and he then told me that the lady, his companion, had gone over to Paris some little time before he was extradited, and had “squared” the bankers by making them a payment of £800, besides covering their costs, and on the day fixed for the trial of course no prosecutor appeared, and Hide was dismissed. This little trip had cost the infatuated lady something like £1,100. Still, although he had behaved in this abominable manner, it did not apparently decrease in any way her intense liking for him, which was put to the test in another way some twelve months afterwards. I had about half-an-hour’s chat with them altogether, and on my departing they both wished me a very cordial good-night, and I walked out into the street, took a hansom, and went home.

One would naturally have thought that a lesson of this kind—for Hide had been in gaol some six weeks altogether, and to a man of his energy the confinement must have been terribly irksome—would have remained impressed upon him through the rest of his life. No; the sweets of liberty being obtained, he enjoyed himself to the utmost of his power, and, if anything, increased his extravagant method of living, but once more the purse became nearly empty, and, in spite of the warning he had received, he entered into another course of conduct equally reprehensible with the former, and in less than eighteen months he was again in my hands.

How I secured him, and the reasons for his second arrest, I must leave for another chapter, as it is rather a long story, to which I fear I cannot here do full justice.

CHAPTER II.

As I remarked in the previous chapter, “within eighteen months Hide found himself again in my hands,” and it occurred thuswise: Finding, as already stated, that his financial straits were becoming desperate, his funds having once more dwindled down to a very unsatisfactory amount, and that forging letters of credit were not, particularly to him, an altogether satisfactory method of “raising the wind,” at all events, judging from his recent and narrow

escape, he determined upon another method, which, though possessing nothing of novelty, for a time seemed to work pretty well and profitably.

He, upon the introduction of his landlady, who was a customer, opened an account with £35, all he had left of his ill-gained £500, at the West-end branch of one of our well-known joint-stock banking companies. This he did, of course, in his proper name. Within a week from this he opened another account at another bank in the same district, by paying into his credit a cheque drawn upon the first bank for £20, keeping this account under the name of Alexander Fisher. Any one knowing the ways and doings of bank managers generally, and how ready they are to welcome new business, particularly when obtained from the customers of opposition companies, will perceive that this was not a difficult matter to carry out under the circumstances.

Having provided himself with two different banking accounts and two books of 100 each of blank cheques, he commenced his operations—the old tale, the old experiences, the old revelations. Goods and change obtained to a considerable amount, and a large number of innocent tradespeople, chiefly of the middle-class, duped. In a few months something like £1,200 had been obtained in this way. To such a pitch had the defaults at length become that at last one of the bank managers, for the sake of the credit and good name of his branch, took the unusual course of initiating the prosecution of “Fisher,” although the bank

itself had not suffered one penny loss by the reason of its always having returned the valueless cheques, duly marked "no effects," as they were presented.

Some of the defrauded people readily acquiesced in the manager's suggestion, and in due time information was supplied to Scotland Yard, and I was entrusted with the task of finding out who and where Alexander Fisher was, he having very cleverly eluded up to that time all endeavours to find him at home at the many different addresses he had given to the unsuspecting shopkeepers. To assist me in the discovery of this individual, who I had not the remotest idea would turn out to be so well known to me, I had a bundle of some fifty or so of the worthless cheques placed in my hands, and, armed with these and a perfectly unsuspecting mind, as I hadn't the ghost of a notion who my "man" might be, I set out on my task.

The first thing I did was to call upon each of the payees of the cheques, which, after a lot of trouble and with the help of the bank manager, I managed to do. This task took me nearly a fortnight. In the meantime, the cheques had ceased coming in, owing to one of two things—either the whole of the blank forms held by Fisher had become exhausted, or he had received timely notice of being suspected and dropped operations for a while. I had hardly had time to make up my mind which, before I was handed by my superior officer other similar cheques, which had been sent in by the Brighton police, having been given to them by an hotel keeper and several dealers in that town. This

circumstance of course cleared up any doubts I might have had upon the matter.

I of course endeavoured to obtain from each of the defrauded persons as well as from the bank manager a description of the "gentleman" who had called upon them. Some said he was a Scotchman, others an Irishman; one said he could swear that he was a foreigner, and the remainder said all sorts of contradictory things. The point upon which they seemed to be generally agreed was that the guilty person was middle-aged and dressed exceedingly well. The bank manager proved the most satisfactory as a supplier of evidence, although he had only seen Fisher once, that being when the account was opened, and upon him I chiefly relied. One man, a wine and spirit merchant, near the Royal Oak, one out of the fifty, remarked that he got his cheque from a lady fashionably attired, and about—well, he couldn't tell the age to something like fifteen years. "Nobody can, you see, sir!" he said. "She's never been in the shop since, and she took two bottles of brandy and the change (£1 18s., which this greenhorn had given her) with her." There was, therefore, nothing much to be made out of this simpleton's evidence.

Of course the bank manager had told me where he got the cheque to open the account from. Fisher had paid it in in person, and called two days after for the cheque-book, and that cheque was signed by my old friend, Rankin P. Hide, but then an inquiry at "Hide's" bankers only proved that that astute individual had made a payment to Fisher of the

twenty pounds with which the latter had opened his account ; besides, the writing was totally dissimilar, and Hide's own account was in a fairly flourishing condition, and he had at that moment about two hundred pounds to his credit, having so recently as ten days before paid in the substantial amount of forty-six pounds odd in cash. No, nothing suspicious was learned there, for I hardly liked to think that Hide would be such a fool—it wasn't quite his nature—to put his head into another noose. His address was correctly given ; he still resided with the widow and her daughter, and everything appeared straightforward enough.

I paid a second visit to the wine and spirit merchant, but I only wasted much valuable time. I could get nothing out of the stupid, conceited man, who, I felt within myself, had only got about what he deserved in his loss of fifty shillings or so, for he was one of those apparently "knowing," but decidedly empty, ignorant men, and prided himself upon possessing a sharpness he had not, and a natural wisdom inherited from his grandfather, who, he was careful to inform me, had carried on his business successfully there before him. His range of vision into character (as the evidence of the cheque seemed to furnish) was, I should say, about as long as one of his champagne cases, and that was all.

After I had been in bed for a few hours (it was Wednesday), and not being able to sleep, I got up, although it was only two a.m., and thought that I would put a large box of papers I had in my bed-room in order, not having gone through them for some time. In that box I came

across several letters written by Hide—which are before me now—one of which contained a very complimentary reference to my courtesy and abilities, and all the rest of it. It then, and only then, for the first time flashed across my mind that perhaps Hide was, after all, playing some other game, and I therefore carefully compared the writing in the letters with that on the various cheques, and I was nearly thunderstruck to find that the letter F in Fisher on one of them exactly corresponded with the F in the words “Fifteen” (pounds) the amount written as though he had commenced writing the word in one class of handwriting, and, finding his error, had completed it—the “ifteen” part of it—in another. The likeness amazed me considerably, so much so that I came to the conclusion, which I determined at the first opportunity to put to the test, that Hide and Fisher were one and the same. There was very little sleep for me, I am afraid, after this discovery, and at nine o’clock, after a particularly hasty breakfast, I was once more at the widow’s house in Bayswater.

“Is Mr. Hide at home?” said I, on my arrival there.

“No, Mr. Moser,” responded the widow, who knew me well enough; “did you want to see him?”

“Yes,” I said, “I do, rather urgently; about an American gentleman, a friend of his.”

“Oh,” said the old lady, “he will be back to-morrow night; he’s been staying at Bognor with Lucy” (her daughter).

“Bognor?” remarked I.

“Dear, dear, me,” said her widowship; “what a memory I have, to be sure. Brighton, I ought to have said, but I do really think I’m getting worse every ——”

“Well,” interrupting her loquacity, “I don’t know that I shall want to see Mr. Hide after all; perhaps I can find some other American who can be of service. Good day.”

I didn’t want to give Hide a chance of quietly slipping away if I could help it.

The Saturday following I made yet another journey to Bayswater, reaching the widow’s house about mid-day. Hide was in, and I was admitted without any objection whatsoever.

“Hallo!” said that individual, who looked sunburnt and remarkably well. “What do you want this time?”

“Oh,” I answered carelessly, “I have had a call from an American gentleman, whom I thought that perhaps you might be of some service to; but first of all, tell me about your trip. Have you had a good time at Brighton?”

“Well, I should say so. Combining business with pleasure. D’ye see, I am doing a little commission work now; buying and selling, and all that sort of thing.”

“Where did you stay at in Brighton?”

“Oh, the ‘Old Boat;’ you know it, don’t you; a quiet,

ancient sort of place, where they treat you well and charge you moderately."

This was the name of the hotel known to every visitor, the proprietor of which had recently handed one of Fisher's cheques to the local police.

"Did you stay anywhere else, Hide?"

"Yes, several places. Hove, Shoreham, and Lewes. You see, I was busy calling upon various people in the districts, and liked to be near my customers."

"So I should imagine. But you also put up at Hassocks Gate and Croydon on the way back, didn't you?"

"Eh, what?" he replied, rather confusedly; "How do you know?"

"Oh, I know a great many things, Hide. Tell me, did you meet any Americans when you were in Brighton and the neighbourhood?"

"No; why do you ask the question?"

"Well, I will tell you. I heard lately that you had been in the company of a very great friend of yours—a gentleman who has known you for a long time."

"Oh, nonsense, nothing at all of the sort. What is this supposed individual's name?"

"Shall I tell you?"

"Yes, certainly."

"Well, then, it is Alexander Fisher."

"It's all up, then, and I suppose you want me to come with you?" This in a rather doleful voice.

“ Yes, please.”

And he came. He is yet engaged in completing a long term of imprisonment for this case and several matters which were brought up against him, and will not be at liberty for at least two years.

It will scarcely be credited that the two silly women, the widow and her daughter, actually tried to “square” matters again, although they were pretty well convinced that Hide was a thorough-paced scamp. As it was they defrayed all the expenses of a long and protracted trial, and in one way and the other they had expended close upon £5,000 solely on this man’s account, simply because they were two infatuated fools, and he a designing, handsome, reckless schemer. To show how hollow this man’s affection was, he had the audacity to write to me from prison, asking if I would visit the daughter in Bayswater, and obtain a paltry sum of some £3 he had left behind him there by mistake when arrested. The letter is of four pages, and is full of complaints at the two ladies’ conduct, whilst the writer poses as a much injured man.

I discovered afterwards that the lady who paid the cheque to the wine merchant was another of Hide’s loves, another simple being who had let him have all the money she possessed besides having run a great risk in cashing some cheques for him, which she now found for the first time were worthless. This was not the worst feature, however, for she turned out to be a niece of the widow, and so

cleverly and artfully had Hide carried on his amours with her that the aunt and cousin were totally ignorant of the intimacy which existed.

It was a pretty involved piece of business, I can assure you, but I venture to think that by now, all concerned have received a pretty salutary lesson, which I hope they will thoroughly take to heart.

A RUSSIAN ROUBLE NOTE FORGERY



CHAPTER I.

THE officers of Scotland Yard always look forward to the investigation of rouble note forgery cases with considerable interest, for the reasons—first, that the arrest of the forgers always bring a great amount of kudos to those who may happen to be engaged in the capture, chiefly on account of the immense amount of work to be done, and the difficulties to be surmounted, before an arrest can be made ; second, because the work is of an indirect character—that is to say, the particulars of the existence and whereabouts of the forgers must invariably be obtained by the employment of “ informers,” and not by the detectives themselves, necessitating in many instances a pretty heavy expenditure of time, patience, and money, for the informers only know too well the value of the information they are able to supply ; third, and not by any means the least important, the Russian Government deals, with a very liberal hand,

rewards to those successful in bringing cases of this kind to light.

There is no doubt whatever that a big business has been, and is still being done in London in making this kind of note, in spite of the intense difficulty, great risk, and expense incurred in their manufacture; indeed, I am quite convinced that at the present time I am certain of the locality of several places where I feel sure this nefarious work is being carried on, and to a very large extent too; but to know this, and for the want of conclusive evidence to arrest the real guilty personages, is a very different matter, as the forgers work in gangs, generally in the most careful and faithful manner, quite sufficient care being taken to baffle the 'cuteness of even the sharpest detective that ever set forth to track them down.

The notes as made here in London are generally conveyed by Polish Jews (confederates) to Russia, and disposed of to the ignorant peasants, from whom they purchase horses, cattle, or poultry, or articles in kind, and to such an extent is the forgery carried on, that Mr. R. Fife, one of the principal officials of the Russian State bank note manufactory at St. Petersburg, who came over, on the occasion of a previous discovery specially for the purpose of personally examining the "find," informed me that he believed that no less than about one million of forged Russian notes were then in circulation; in fact, so constant and so frequent were the forgeries that whole issues of notes have to be called in and stopped by the Government in order to

make detection successful ; for instance, the 1876 (which was the date of the notes I was instrumental in finding), issue had been called in during 1881.

The notes which have been mostly forged in this country are the three, five, ten, and twenty-five roubles. They are all extremely difficult to make—in fact, quite as hard to manufacture as the English ones, which is saying a very great deal—they require in some instances as many as eight or ten plates, and being printed in different colours, and the workmanship being of the finest and minutest description, I have every reason to believe that it has on many occasions occupied the forgers years to prepare and make them, without reckoning in any way the large amount of money required to purchase the necessary materials.

As I before remarked, the forgers always work in gangs, and they are generally men who have known and trusted each other for some considerable period, and not at all likely, if arrested, to “peach” upon one another. They are extremely cautious and “business-like” in their movements, and take very great care that none of the notes or the plant shall get into any hands but of those whom they are thoroughly acquainted with, as they know full well the heavy nature of the punishment meted out to them should they be found out. To arrest one or two of the gang would be nearly useless. The whole—if any at all—batch and factory must be seized if it is desirable to put a stop to their work. Therefore, through the difficulties described and the causes alluded to, arrests of these persons are few and far

between, and take place generally under circumstances of no ordinary character.

In the year 1883, having had my suspicions aroused by certain movements which took place in a certain district, I was convinced that a "manufactory" was being carried on there. I watched most patiently and persistently for some time the actions of the persons I suspected, but still could not, with any degree of certainty, positively satisfy myself as to their doings, and it is far better in this class of work not to arrest at all than to arrest the wrong individual, for the simple reason that by making the apprehension of any but the guilty, it gives to those who ought to be arrested a note of warning, and who would then take the earliest opportunity of clearing out and render the clue still more difficult to follow up. I therefore secured a reliable, trustworthy man as "informer," who had done very satisfactory work for me on former occasions—we will call him Geld—and engaged him, being a Pole, to carefully take up my "threads" and carry out my instructions and report to me regularly. Please recollect, reader, that all this has to be done at the sole expense of the detective Inspector himself out of the three pounds ten shillings per week which the authorities are good enough to grant him as "pay," and that out of this sum the detective, after contributing to different charities and funds in connection with the force, reducing his actual wages to about forty-five shillings, must defray all expenses incurred on behalf of his suspects up to almost the time of their capture. Should he by some

unfortunate means not be successful in "carrying his case through," he loses entirely the whole amount expended, Scotland Yard excusing itself under the standing order of "they had never sanctioned the expenditure."

The illiberal treatment of our detective force in matters of this kind is one of the crying evils of the day. Until the Government takes in hand seriously the whole administration of Scotland Yard, separating it entirely from the police force, placing it under competent and practical heads, remunerating its officials in a manner befitting their position and responsibilities, putting them above all temptations and bribes, and giving them a liberal allowance for incidentals, we shall always have the department what it is now, considering the great amount of work thrown upon it, complex and indefinite; but this merely by the way.

Geld, after having taken up the clues I had given him was able, after some few weeks, to speak pretty confidently of his progress, one day in August reporting to me that he believed that a man named Soltoff, whom, I learned, had previously been convicted for dealing in forged Russian notes, had again in his possession—endeavouring to negotiate them—what Geld called "papers," this being the term used by such men to designate them. (Among English criminals, notes are usually called "flimsies.") He had managed with considerable difficulty to scrape up a personal acquaintance with Soltoff, and he thought by judicious and careful management we might together be able to persuade the man to sell us some, but Soltoff being

such an extremely cautious man, Geld thought it quite necessary and advisable to find a bogus buyer, a third person, who must be either a Pole or a Russian, and be quite willing and able to work with us against his countryman. I promised Geld to find a man of that description, and, after several interviews, we finally arranged the following plan to entrap Soltoff.

The buyer's name was to be Marcus Rosenthal, he was apparently to write or address from Hamburg to Geld a confidential letter, stating the date of his proposed arrival in London and the purport of his visit, "that he wanted to purchase, and would pay a liberal price for a batch of forged notes," &c. To do this I had no difficulty, merely despatching another informer to Hamburg to assume this rôle, who, after his arrival there, immediately forwarded the note just described. The bait "took," for after Geld showed Soltoff the epistle, the latter, after having most carefully examined the post-mark and dates, expressed himself as quite ready and willing to enter into negotiations with Rosenthal, Geld's supposed friend. It was then arranged that both Soltoff and Geld should meet Rosenthal, who was expected to arrive by the London Steam Navigation boat at St. Katharine's Wharf in a few days.

On the 16th of August Rosenthal (previously primed with particulars, and fully charged with his duties) arrived, and was met and taken to some lodgings in a small coffee-shop in an out-of-the-way place in the East-end, where the three talked matters over, with the result that Soltoff exhibited

so much confidence in the apparent *bona fides* of the other two as to actually produce a few forged twenty-five rouble notes as specimens, stating that he had also a good stock of those representing five roubles in value, and wished to know the quantity Rosenthal required, as he was ready to supply him at the rate of 7*s.* for the twenty-five roubles, and 18*s.* per hundred for the five roubles, which showed, it must be admitted, a pretty considerable profit for everybody concerned ; the money, however, was to be paid in advance. And here I may diverge a little by stating that one of the peculiarities of this class of forgers is, that when negotiating their wares they require the presumed buyers to convince them of their good faith by an actual display of money. Scotland Yard officers know this, and therefore provide themselves or their informers with as much cash for "exhibiting" purposes as they can get hold of, swelling the bulk occasionally with a number of sham English notes, to give as attractive an appearance as possible to their supposed possession of means wherewith to purchase.

Another peculiarity is, that the forger or dealers require the money to be paid before delivery, undertaking to send the forged articles to any agreed address within a certain number of hours, to prevent, it is presumed, their running the risk of being seized whilst actually holding the goods.

I had, however, from previous experience anticipated all this sort of thing, and prepared to act accordingly, for I did not care to place much of my money in the hands of an unmitigated scoundrel like Soltoff, who would just as soon

clear out with it at the first favourable opportunity without in the least troubling himself about the bargain he may have entered into, nor did I feel quite justified in entrusting it even to Geld or Rosenthal, although they were in their way quite as safe as most of the people whom one doesn't feel inclined to trust any further than the length of the fall of their shadow, as I soon learned in the force that "informers" will remain faithful to you as long as they can see some personal advantage likely to accrue from their steadfastness beyond that being, as a rule, perfectly characterless individuals, oftentimes supplying information with almost only the sole hope of being able to secure their own personal liberty; they are not, therefore, take them as a body, by any means, to be trusted. I gave Rosenthal instructions to remain in Soltoff's (whom I knew was daily getting shorter of money) company, and give me as much opportunity as possible to observe his movements myself. I soon, however, discovered Soltoff's extreme cautiousness, and as I did not want to spoil the chances of an apparently good case, I curbed my zeal and dropped into the background for a while.

I may mention that the forgers themselves generally have one or two friendly spies watching their movements, so that in case of the arrest of the one negotiating that they can at once give the alarm to the rest of the gang, thus enabling them to get safely away. This again renders matters more difficult, as the mere discovery of a man with a few forged notes in his possession does not lead up to a great deal if

he is staunch in his work and comradeship—it leads to nothing, in fact, beyond a moderately heavy punishment for himself and the dispersal by alarm of the whole body of his allies.

Nothing fresh seemed to transpire, and after a long consultation with my then colleague, Inspector Abberline, of the H Division, on whose “ground” all this was taking place, we decided that Rosenthal should express himself as being greatly dissatisfied at the shabby way Soltoff was treating him, by keeping him hanging about without coming to business (recollect that he, at my instigation, objected to pay in advance), and having some friends in Paris, he made pretence to leave Soltoff for a time and pay a visit to these friends.

CHAPTER II.

As a matter of fact, however, Rosenthal did not make the journey to Paris, but remained in London, and I arranged instead that letters should be sent (through friends) from the former place to Geld, who, in due course, would show them to Soltoff. I did this because I had already been put to very considerable expense in the matter, which I was disinclined to increase.

The temporary delay thus planned out had a magical effect upon Soltoff, who was daily becoming financially more

reduced, in fact, to such straits had he come that he pawned all his available personal property, and expressed himself quite willing to entertain almost any offer which might be obtained for a supply of forged notes in order that he might be provided with the cash necessary to relieve him from his monetary troubles.

I therefore made it convenient for Rosenthal to again appear on the scene, as though he had by request, at Geld's instigation, just been brought over from Paris, and I arranged for him to occupy a top room in a not overclean house in a wretched, dirty, little back street in Finsbury.

Soltoff, prompt to his appointment, again appeared prepared to discuss "business" with Geld and Rosenthal. There was, even in the few weeks that had elapsed, a very great difference in his personal appearance ; he looked careworn, flabby, dejected, out at elbows, and down at heel, his eyes heavy and bloodshot, and an evil, don't-care, reckless look upon his countenance which denoted desperation and hunger.

After partaking freely of some whisky which Geld produced, he became very talkative and anxious to negotiate, taking a considerable personal liking to Rosenthal, whom he called "chum ;" indeed, he went so far as to inform Geld that he would prefer dealing with Rosenthal alone. Acting on this hint, Geld readily withdrew, and left the two to come to terms if possible. They got on very well together, went about a great deal, Rosenthal plying his companion pretty liberally with stimulants, taking him to

places of amusement, and so forth, with the view of thoroughly and firmly establishing confidence, because Soltoff, right up to the last, displayed his usual caution. He would not, however, on any consideration produce the notes in any quantity, but preferred dealing with a few only at first, as a kind of test purchase, to see if Rosenthal really was what he pretended to be, a *bonâ fide* anxious buyer. Rosenthal refused to come to terms for a small quantity, being wishful to purchase a large number only, and thus they haggled about—at my expense—for days, during the whole time of which Soltoff remained with Rosenthal, never permitting him to go out of sight, accompanying him everywhere, even sleeping with him, to prevent the possibility of any “outsider” approaching or communicating with him.

At last, getting tired of Rosenthal's apparent reluctance to purchase a small quantity of the goods, Soltoff roundly abused him, swore at him, and told him that he heard he was a spy, in the pay of and sent over by the Russian Government, that he had no money at all, and that his supposed commission to purchase was entirely a myth, and that he would not have this nonsense any longer. This was rather rough on Rosenthal, who had been spending money (mine) freely on Soltoff, but the exhibition of about 2,000 francs, also mine—(I having supplied this at a great personal sacrifice; in fact, to keep going the expenses in this case I had to pawn many of my valuables, including a very handsome presentation gold chronometer watch which had

been given to me as a reward in a previous case in which I had been successful, and I "stood in" to lose all these, anticipating, with something akin to fear and trembling the whole case collapsing on account of Soltoff's obduracy and want of confidence)—somewhat reassured him.

During all this time I experienced the greatest possible difficulty in being furnished with details as to the progress of my informers, it necessitating all my available ingenuity to be kept *au fait* with what was going on. Geld could only see Rosenthal for a few moments at a time, and by signs get to know through him how matters were getting along, communicating my instructions as best he could. All I learned for a period that seemed almost endless, was that Soltoff, possessed of an extremely violent temperament, was nervous and excitable and got exceedingly angry on the slightest possible provocation, particularly as he found money hard to get hold of, and that negotiations were not presenting the rosy appearance he would wish them to do.

Inspector Abberline and myself, finding the drain upon our resources becoming greater and greater without any immediate prospect of their being reinforced, affairs having been hanging about for quite a month, held another "council of war," and came to the conclusion that it was time once more to change the tactics of our campaign. We had, however, made one discovery, and that of no little importance—*i.e.*, that Soltoff resided, or lodged, in a certain place near Wandsworth, and that he was in occasional communication with another individual, who

was said to be the actual holder of all the plates, paper, plant, and other paraphernalia necessary for the proper carrying on of this profitable but risky trade.

In the first week in September I instructed Rosenthal, through Geld, to inform Soltoff that unless he permitted him to see the notes in the process of their manufacture, so that they could there and then be handed over to him, he should refuse to carry the negotiation any further, pleading as an excuse that he doubted very much, after all, whether Soltoff really had the notes to deal with, or the means to obtain a supply, &c. Of course I felt convinced that Soltoff would never consent to such a proceeding as this. He was far too careful, and valued his liberty a great deal too much, than to place himself in a trap of this description. And he naturally refused. Therefore Rosenthal pretended that he could not waste any more time in the matter, left him his London address (at a friend's), where it could be forwarded in case Soltoff might feel inclined to alter his views, and so on, and withdrew under the further pretence that he (Rosenthal) would at once depart for Russia.

I immediately took my holidays, my "vacation" having arrived, spending them at Hastings, grateful for the relief from my duties which a fortnight's stay there afforded, leaving my whereabouts of course known to Geld and Rosenthal in case I should be "wanted." I had not been away more than about ten days when I received a "wire" from Geld, stating that he wanted to see me again on the matter. I replied, asking him to come on to

Hastings, which he did, there informing me that he had the same morning seen Soltoff, who appeared to be in the utmost state of poverty, almost in rags, and nearly broken down altogether, that he thought the time was riper than ever it had been, and that any offer made would probably be readily accepted.

I then laid down another plan. Geld was to return at once to London and tell Soltoff that he had discovered another buyer of forged notes at Hastings, a Russian gentleman whose name was Radzliski (the name I assumed); and that this gentleman, if Soltoff cared to make the journey to Hastings, was quite prepared to put his money down at once for a large quantity if the articles were satisfactory. After some little hesitation Soltoff fell in with the suggestion, and a day, the 29th of September, was fixed for his visit to the supposed Russian gentleman.

Geld had done his duty well, he had worked Soltoff into a great state of excitement at the prospect of success, having told him that if he carried a good supply of notes with him he would undoubtedly come to terms, and return to town a much richer and happier man, all of which Soltoff was inclined to believe.

It was agreed by Geld and Soltoff that they should leave for Hastings, not from any of the chief termini, but, to avert suspicion and prevent the possibility of a "slip" of any kind occurring, from Clapham Junction. I was, of course, informed of this, and I arranged with Geld that he should ask Soltoff to show him the notes before they

started, to convince him that he was not proceeding on a fruitless journey. If the request was complied with, and Geld was satisfied that Soltoff really had a number in his possession, he should raise his hat in the covered subway which led to the various and numerous platforms of that bewildering station. I was, of course, stationed there myself, and for fear of "accidents," placed Rosenthal in a convenient corner at the other end.

It was an exciting time—a very exciting time—as you may be assured, for Soltoff was a man who would not hesitate to stick at a trifle if once thoroughly aroused. He was, too, a rather powerful fellow, and altogether as undesirable a character, physically and morally, as one could possibly meet with; therefore, I looked forward to a personal meeting with him with feelings somewhat mixed.

At length the moment arrived, and Geld passed in, being closely followed by Soltoff. The former, whether out of excitement or in fear that I had not perceived them, stupidly threw his hat in the air, which caused Soltoff to scent something and turn quickly round, but before he had time to take advantage of any determination he had come to, I had seized him firmly and backed him into a recess, when the following dialogue occurred :—

"You are Mr. Soltoff?"

"No, I am not."

"Oh, yes, you are. I believe you have a quantity of forged rouble notes about you, and I am going to arrest you."

He saw it was all "up," and immediately commenced to struggle to escape, declining to come with me.

Rosenthal came to my assistance, and after about twenty minutes of the hardest tussle I have ever been engaged in, we managed to force our prisoner into a cab, where he renewed his efforts with such vigour that it took us all our time to keep him in hand. We eventually reached the police station, and there I searched him, and found in his possession 203 forged twenty-five rouble notes, two sheets of paper prepared for printing purposes bearing water-marks, and also other paper for printing five-rouble notes.

At this discovery Soltoff became tremendously excited, using language of a forcible kind with very great freedom, eloquently denying that the notes, &c., were his, and stating that they had been "planted" on him outside the railway station by an informer, all of which statements were duly recorded, to be used in evidence when necessary. He refused his address, but on an envelope bearing a recent post-mark, which I also found on him, was an address comparing exactly with the one we had previously learned of.

I telegraphed for Abberline, and upon his joining me we paid a visit to Soltoff's lodgings, which, as it has been shown, were not far off. There we found several large boxes, and in these no less than six plates for the manufacture of five-rouble notes, a black bag, 1,680 sheets of water-marked paper (each sheet making four notes) for five-rouble notes, and a plate for water-marking. This

was, indeed, a "find," and something worth getting hold of; but I felt sure that this was not all and quite convinced that Soltoff was at the head or connected with even much more than we had already discovered, for we had yet to learn where to find the "plant," or factory, where the notes had been made and printed. It took us two days to do this, and we should perhaps have remained in ignorance of its whereabouts to the present day if it had not been for a circumstance which attracted our attention in another direction and which must be described in a further chapter.

CHAPTER III.

DURING the time we were searching the house I noticed—not unnaturally, perhaps, considering the nature of the circumstances attending our being present—that both the landlady and her daughter, a young woman of about 23 years of age, were considerably agitated and distressed.

What the distress and agitation meant I was hardly in a position to say, for the expressions were much too violent to be merely the outcome of surprise at the arrest of Soltoff and the search of the house, for disturbing as these proceedings might be to the peace of mind of a, perhaps, unsuspecting landlady and her daughter, I began to think that the great interest they both suddenly seemed to have in our movements would, perhaps, if examined closely, have some-

thing in it. There was any amount of whispering and numbers of secret conversations going on—such a rushing about backwards and forwards that would have attracted the attention of even less suspicious men than ourselves, but when either Abberline or myself appeared to be noticing these movements, signs, and proceedings, they instantly ceased, and the mother and daughter immediately appeared most anxious to help us with hints or information; so well, however, did they play their respective parts that on more than one occasion I dismissed from my mind the possibility of either or both of them having personally anything to do with the affair—or, indeed, having any knowledge whatsoever of Soltoff's guilt.

Still, there was a something not altogether to my mind satisfactory, and I determined to sift it and see what I could make of it. I noticed that regularly during the forty-eight hours we were watching the place the daughter left the house at almost precisely the same hour each day, returning quite as regularly about an hour or so afterwards, when almost instantly began all the mysterious indications already alluded to. At last it occurred to me to follow the young woman and see where she went. I had not gone many yards before I could perceive that she had observed my intention. She, therefore, went at once into a small general shop close at hand and made some little purchase or other. I followed, and also bought something, and when in the shop pretended to be surprised to find her there, spoke to her, and saw she was intensely uncomfortable.

We walked back together to her mother's, when we all had a short conversation together, when I said that, having been so long in trying to find a clue to the whereabouts of Soltoff's factory, I was afraid that it was little use spending any further time on the matter, and that Abberline and myself would both go home. We accordingly wished them good night, telling them to be sure and communicate with us if they heard of or could learn anything more. It was quite dark, and taking advantage of it we walked round to the back of the house, and secreted ourselves in the yard of the next one, which, being a corner one, offered us an opportunity of being able to see the young woman. Very shortly after our departure, she came out, had a good look round, and then proceeded at a brisk walk down the street. I followed her, keeping very much in the background, so much so, in fact, that I feared losing sight of her altogether, when in about ten minutes' time she arrived at a fairly decent sort of dwelling—the usual suburban £30 house—and producing a latch-key, opened the door and went in.

I carefully noted the number, and waited in a convenient entry immediately opposite. Presently she came out, looked once more carefully around, and hurried back to her mother's. By this time Abberline had come up, and together we proceeded to the house, knocked at the door, which was cautiously opened by a girl about eighteen, evidently, from appearances, a sister of the young woman who had just left. I at once said, "We are detectives, and believe that you have some machinery in this house for

making forged notes, and we are going to search." At this we heard a shuffling noise at the end of the passage, some hurrying upstairs, and the rapid closing of a door. We then asked for a light, and proceeded at once to the room where we suspected the sound came from. The door was fastened ; we knocked. "Who is it? You can't come in ; I'm in bed."

"The police. If you do not unfasten the door we shall burst it open."

"All right ; wait half a moment until I put my trousers on."

Finding the half moment much longer than was anticipated by us, we forced our way in, when, instead of seeing a bed-room, as we had been led to believe the room to be, we discovered a regularly and perfectly fitted-up workshop, replete with everything necessary to carry on printing on a fairly large scale, and sitting on the corner of a bench by the window a middle-aged man, vainly trying to appear as though nothing whatever had happened. Half a glance at the condition and surroundings of the place showed me that we had at last found the right place. The middle-aged individual, who was named Jones, had evidently expected us, and had prepared accordingly by destroying all he could in the fire, which was burning brightly in the grate, and which had every evidence of some papers having recently been thrown into it. He had, however, been too careful, and yet not careful enough to conceal the traces of his handiwork, for we extricated from the grate quite sufficient of

partly charred material to satisfy us that it was bank-note paper, and in the intricate portions of the press we found small cuttings and slips proving the existence, at one time or the other, of partly printed twenty-five rouble note paper.

Jones soon saw that the "game" was up, and gave in at once, but not before having fairly compromised himself in several statements, besides making himself ridiculous with others; but the lamest of the lame excuses that could possibly be concocted he used in reply to the questions put to him at the police station, when he said that Soltoff had brought the plates produced to him, knowing he was a printer, and had told him he would shoot him if he didn't print them, a cock-and-bull sort of a story which excited considerable amusement among the officials concerned.

We returned to Jones's house, had another good "hunt round," and in a Christmas number of *London Society*, which was lying on a box in another room, we found intact between the leaves one of the steel plates which had been used in the forging of the notes. Some alarm had been caused by our actions, for on our arrival we found our friend, the landlady, and her daughter in hysterics. The latter turned out to be the wife of Jones, and both the women had undoubtedly been aware for some time past what had been going on, although we could not get sufficient evidence to prove that either of them had taken any part whatsoever in the manufacture or negotiation of the notes. However, we arrested the younger one, as she seemed the more interested,

but at the trial she was acquitted on the ground that she, being a married woman, had only acted under the express authority of her husband in anything that she had done. Jones himself obtained six months, it being alleged that he was merely the dupe of Soltoff, whom Mr. Recorder, of the Central Criminal Court, sentenced to seven years' penal servitude, and who was undoubtedly a scamp, having himself admitted in court that he had previously been, to use his own words, "entrapped, and had served time."

* * * * *

These discoveries and arrests caused no little sensation at the time, and even now, although the circumstances occurred so long ago, I occasionally, chiefly from continental friends, receive congratulations, for a matter of this kind being made almost international by the desire of the Russian Government to spare neither trouble nor expense to bring the forgers to justice, acts vary naturally as a powerful stimulant to all police officials whether at home or abroad.

This particular discovery must have saved the Czar's Government some thousands of pounds, for even at the stage of the proceedings as I found them, letting alone entirely the future opportunity which might have occurred from the continued manufacture and disposal of the forged notes, we found papers and material which, if completed, would have produced at least 10,000 notes, and the greater portion being twenty-five rouble notes, this amount shows roughly about £25,000.

The notes were exceedingly well manufactured. Indeed,

I saw one of them again only the other day—it was, of course, cancelled, and printed across “forged”—and it struck me as being a most marvellous piece of workmanship. How these men, with apparently limited machinery, and a small space to work in, can so successfully produce their goods puzzles me, as it has puzzled scores of others. The time, attention, perseverance, and patience—apart altogether from the exceeding risk they run—the forgers display is wonderful; they seem perfectly fascinated with their work, and leave no stone unturned to carry it out to a profitable and successful issue.

To show the immense ingenuity displayed by Soltoff and Jones, who must have been really experts at their particular trade, I have only to mention the water-mark on the notes, which, as my readers are all aware, is the chief difficulty to be got over in manufacturing paper money. The Bank of England has a process so perfect, so secret, and so reliable, that makes the notes ready of recognition, and which is almost impossible to imitate without the imitation being at once detected. The same with the Russian and most other Governments; the utmost skill and ingenuity is continually being brought to bear to render the process of manufacture still more finished and complete and to render forgery even more arduous than it is. Soltoff and Jones got over the water-mark difficulty in a most wonderful manner. They secured in the first instance the paper of the requisite size, colour, and texture. Where they got these from, and where forgers continue to obtain them from, I cannot presume to

say. Then they procured a copper plate, and by graving, left a raised surface upon it nearly corresponding to the marks on a genuine note, then pressed the papers one at a time on the top of a plate, rubbing each paper with exceedingly fine emery cloth, which had the effect of cutting out, as it were, a natural or perfect counterfeit of the original, and which, when held to the light, had precisely the same effect upon the beholder as the genuine ones.

I perhaps ought to have mentioned that Jones was a practical printer, for upon investigation I found out that he had been for a number of years and was, up to the time of his arrest, employed by a large, well-known, and respected firm of printers, performing this nefarious work for Soltoff when he reached home in the evening as overtime. His previous good character had no doubt been taken into consideration in his sentence, hence the reason of its lightness.

The judge and jury greatly commended Mr. Abberline and myself for the part we had played in the matter, nevertheless I must confess that our arrangement with our "informers" was pretty severely handled by Mr. Besley and Mr. Frith, who appeared for Soltoff and Jones respectively, but this was set right very shortly afterwards upon re-examination by the well-known Mr. Poland and the highly-respected Mr. Montagu Williams, one of the smartest barristers that ever practised at the English criminal bar, who appeared for the prosecution. Had it not, however, been for the extremely able advocacy of Soltoff's counsel I feel sure that, upon his own admission of a previous incarceration, he

would have got a sentence of double the length. I suppose if he has "behaved" himself, he is free again now, and I am not a little curious to know his present position and whereabouts. I wonder whether ever I shall meet him again, and where and under what circumstances?

Jones, I am informed, turned over a new leaf, and obtained employment at another firm, where he is, I believe, to this day working steadily and doing well, having recently been promoted to the foremanship of his department. I feel sure that *he* did not altogether appreciate his half-year's hard labour for attempting to defraud his Imperial Majesty the Emperor of all the Russias.

* * * * *

In due time, the Russian Government expressed their satisfaction by forwarding a cheque for £500, out of which I received £150, the deduction of the authorities bringing it down to that amount, otherwise I should and ought to have received half of the original sum. Be it noted that during my connection with Scotland Yard any reward whatever coming in was subject to a deduction of exactly one-fourth as a donation to the reward fund; besides this there were sundry allowances stopped out of it, and the various officers, who had, perhaps, only in the most perfunctory manner been associated with the arrest, and although they had not had the slightest connection with the pecuniary or physical risk in the capture, were remunerated in some wonderful manner or other which neither I nor anybody else seemed able to understand or appreciate; then, after

totalling up my expenses out of pocket "not sanctioned by the authorities," such as the wages of the informer, fares, minor rewards, &c., to the extent of another £40 or £50, I at last, through the maze of the unsatisfactory red-tapeism then reigning at Scotland Yard, but now suppressed somewhat, was given some paltry £60 or so as a recompense for all my trouble and anxiety and time, and refused permission to wear or accept the decoration which the Russian Government bestows very properly, and, I think, very loyally, upon any one who renders it a service similar to the one I did. Had I not been successful, I should practically have lost a third of my year's salary by having had to find all the expenses myself. This system, so delightfully encouraging to those who wish to exert and distinguish themselves in the Criminal Investigation Department, is, I am glad to hear, at last broken down. Mr. Howard Vincent, I believe, was responsible for the establishment of the secret service reward fund. Some of its difficulties and disadvantages I have endeavoured to portray, but since Mr. Monro has been appointed I believe he has taken in hand the broom of reform, and, with a determination which every officer will applaud, seems disposed to sweep out of this most important branch of the service some of the abuses which, with a thoroughly practical, energetic chief, would, in the ordinary course of things, have been swept out long ago.

A CONTINENTAL TOUR.



CHAPTER I.

NICHOLAS ROMOVITCH was a Russian residing at Metchovsk, in the province of Kalovga ; he was, though illiterate—by reason of the neglect of his earlier education, having run away from home at the age of twelve—connected with one of the best families in St. Petersburg. Life had been rough with him, and he found himself at the brink of its close—for he was getting well on for seventy when first I became acquainted with him—utterly friendless and forgotten, and the old man, who had outlived almost all the relatives he had known, picked up a living—which at its brightest was a precarious one—the best way he could, doing all sorts of odd jobs for all sorts of odd inhabitants in the town above mentioned, glad to do anything in fact that would obtain him food, oftentimes barely sufficient, lodging, wretched at the best, and clothes, such as they were, wherever he could. He had come to regard life as purely a season—to him a long one—of necessary existence, and he had made up his mind that the world ran in grooves and was purely mechanical.

He felt that he was in *his* groove, and was slowly but surely being pushed to the end of it.

But that end was bound to finish in a totally unexpected and very interesting manner, for one day, just as Nicholas had been soliloquising in a little more than his usual misanthropical manner, he was greatly astonished and equally delighted to find himself the recipient of the following letter, which, being translated for him, ran thus :—

ABCHURCH LANE, LONDON, E.C.

July 3rd, 1882.

DEAR SIR,—We find under the will of your late brother, Josef Romovitch, that you are entitled to the sum of £15,180, part of a fund at present invested in Bank of England Stock, and await your instructions as to its disposal. Yours truly,

WARD, STAVEMHOFF & CO.,

Solicitors for the late Josef Romovitch.

The old man's surprise continued to increase the more he regarded the matter, for he was quite under the impression that no one connected with his kindred knew of his whereabouts. He, however, carefully thought the matter over, and came to the conclusion that he would visit England at once and transact the business himself. So after procuring the necessary credentials of identification, he sold up his little belongings and managed somehow or other to raise sufficient means for the journey.

He arrived in London at the latter end of August, naturally highly elated at the prospect of a comfortable, though

perhaps short, experience opened up for him. He was not at all likely from his personal appearance to strike anybody that he was heir to a fifteen thousand pound fortune, for he was a seedy, dirty-looking, decrepit individual, not able to speak or write a single syllable of English, and looking for all the world like an old clothes vendor in a decidedly poor way of business.

He presented himself in due course at Messrs. Ward and Stavemhoff's, and there, by the assistance of a foreign clerk, he managed to satisfy the firm as to his being the right man. He was advanced fifty pounds on account, and asked to wait a few days whilst they prepared the requisite deeds of release, &c.

Romovitch found London—big and thickly populated as it is—a dreadfully lonesome place, for he knew not a soul, and it was with the greatest possible difficulty that he could make himself understood, for the Russian language is not by any means a language that English people take up for, as it were, a mere amusement or accomplishment, and it is only in certain quarters that one can hear it in its native ruggedness and vernacular. These quarters were unknown to the old man, and he had not had the good sense to ask the solicitors, who were a decent, respectable firm; therefore he “mouched” about, sleeping in a small private hotel, and thought the “few days” were terribly lengthy and wearisome.

In one of his daily peregrinations he reached a street off Bond Street, where another extraordinary piece of good

fortune awaited him, at which he seemed hugely pleased, though to an outsider it might not perhaps seem a very important incident. It was the discovery of a door-plate bearing the words, in English and in Russian, "Mr. Borowski, Professor and Teacher of Russian, and Interpreter."

I firmly believe that if Mr. Borowski had been at home—which he wasn't—he would have received such an outburst of gratitude at the hands of Romovitch that might have been somewhat embarrassing, if not overpowering. Fortunately for the professor, the old man had to wait some three hours for his return, and by that time his ardour had subsided a little ; but even then his greeting and expression of pleasure were very warm and pronounced. Thereupon commenced such a gabbling that it seemed almost as if the whole three weeks of Romovitch's pent-up feelings must have been given effect to. It ended, however, in an arrangement with Borowski being entered into, whereby that gentleman was to give Nicholas his whole services, accompanying him everywhere until he had settled up all his business, &c., for the remuneration of £1 per day.

Borowski had formerly been an officer in the Russian Army, in fact, he was one of our prisoners in the Crimean war, and had been brought over with many others to Plymouth, being then only a youth. He was a man of considerable linguistic attainments, of very gentlemanly bearing, was a correspondent of a St. Petersburg newspaper, had a comfortable set of apartments, and to all appearance was doing well and earning a fair livelihood. He was good-

looking, well-built, and powerful, his moustache and hair turned grey, and apparently about 55 years of age.

Together the two went sight-seeing, purchasing agricultural implements, as Romovitch had made up his mind to take up farming as a profitable recreation upon his return to Met chovsk, and transacting various other matters of business on the strength of the settlement taking place, which event was fixed for the 22nd of the month. This date arrived, and Romovitch, accompanied by his interpreter, or courier, or friend, or whatever he might be pleased to be called, visited the solicitors, and they were there joined by one of the executors of his brother's will, and the four—solicitor, executor, Romovitch, and Borowski—proceeded to the Bank of England, where Nicholas duly received bonds to the amount he was entitled to, obtained some cash, repaid the solicitor the money he had borrowed, and came away with Borowski.

Romovitch felt, very reasonably perhaps, that somehow it was not quite the safest thing to do to go about London with the bonds (which he had placed in a small black bag he had with him), and was anxious that they should be placed somewhere in safety, and decided upon Borowski's suggestion that when they got home they should cut off the due and current coupons, and afterwards put the bonds in the care of one of the safe deposit companies.

They went to the place Romovitch was staying at, had some lunch, then made their way to Borowski's, for the purpose of detaching the coupons and carrying out their pre-

cautions. The work occupied them about a couple of hours, and at five o'clock they had completed their task.

They then dined together, and after dinner played chess for a time, when suddenly Romovitch started up with the determination of, unreasonable hour though it was, visiting one of the other individuals who had benefited under the will, an Englishman residing at Notting Hill. They, for safety's sake, took the bag with them, it being too late to do anything as regards placing it in custody that night. Their journey proved a fruitless one, for the person was not in, and there was nothing to do but to retrace their steps to Borowski's apartments, and have more chess, &c., and finish out the evening in a convivial and pleasant manner.

About ten o'clock the old gentleman thought it was quite time to go back to his hotel and turn in for the night, and got up from the table for that purpose, going into the next room, where his hat, stick, and bag had been deposited. Borowski followed to the door of the apartment, and as Romovitch was coming out placed himself in a position to prevent his doing so. Romovitch was alarmed at this strange behaviour, but before he could offer any opinion on the matter Borowski seized him, threw him down on the floor, and continued to squeeze his throat until he was helpless and almost insensible, Romovitch just remembering that his assailant, hearing some footsteps on the staircase, left hold of him, and, seizing the bag, ran out of the house with it.

When Romovitch recovered sufficiently, he went out into

the street, and, seeing a policeman, endeavoured to explain to him what had happened, but that official, not happening to have a knowledge of Russian in his list of accomplishments, failed to understand him ; however, he returned to the house with Nicholas, and somehow or other it was elicited that Romovitch had been robbed of his bonds (which were payable to bearer), and he was advised to go at once to the nearest police station (Marlborough Street) and give full particulars. This he proceeded to do as well as the condition of mind and body would permit him.

The case was, after a few preliminary inquiries, owing to its importance, handed over to Scotland Yard, and it was there I became acquainted with it by its being placed in my hands, the late Detective-inspector King, on whose "ground" the affair took place, assisting me. King was an able, genial, and good fellow, and I shall not readily forget the kindness and ready ungrudging help he displayed in the matter.

The usual precautions were taken, telegrams being despatched to all ports and every principal city and town on the continent, and after this was done, King and I set to work to see whether we could find the delinquent in London.

We had no clue whatever at the start, which rendered our progress naturally very slow and tedious. One important fact, however, we discovered, and that was that Borowski in his haste to decamp had left his hat behind him, which we promptly took possession of. We searched

his rooms thoroughly, but could obtain not the slightest indication as to his whereabouts. Among his papers, however, we found the name and address of a young lady, whom he visited, and after a considerable amount of trouble, managed to obtain from her an excellent photograph of Borowski, very recently taken, and which he had presented to her only a few weeks before. This was, indeed, something to get hold of, and our spirits went up accordingly.

A quantity of reward bills, giving a description of Borowski, were printed and distributed among the various cabmen, who, I may mention, are often of great assistance to detectives, for, as a rule, they possess excellent memories and have a power of observation which seem to increase in proportion to the length of their experience.

We also struck off a large number of lithographs from the photo, gave a full and complete list of the stolen bonds, as well as a description of the man we wanted, and despatched these to the principal bankers and money-changers both in Europe and America.

We laboured patiently for days, leaving no stone unturned which might, perhaps, help us to facilitate matters, but it was not until quite a fortnight afterwards that even the slightest ray of light could be thrown upon Borowski's movements, when a fresh-looking, wide-awake cabman came into the "Yard" one day and stated, much to our delight, that he remembered picking up a gentleman answering the

advertised description ; he had no hat on, and was driven to Charing Cross Railway Station.

We cross-examined "Mr. Cabby" pretty severely, but could not in any way shake his evidence or contradict his statements ; he was thoroughly positive, so much so, that he declared that he could easily pick out the man if he saw him again.

After having a long conference with my superior officers and King, it was decided that I should go at once to Paris to see whether I could pick up any clue there, and that King should remain in London and exercise his skill and ingenuity in the best way he could ; therefore, exactly seventeen days after the crime had been committed, I was despatched with, I must confess, very little hope of being able to find my man, considering the length of the start he had obtained, for he might by then have reached California for aught I knew or suspected. He certainly had plenty of time to do it in if he had felt disposed to make the journey.

I duly arrived in the gay, frivolous capital, Paris, my first feeling being that Borowski would probably fall short of ready money, and, until he had been able to cash some of the proceeds of the robbery, be compelled to be somewhat economical, probably taking up his quarters at some third-rate lodging or other. I was, therefore, greatly astonished to find that he had acted just contrariwise to my expectations, for I succeeded in tracing him to a no less fashionable and expensive resort than the Grand Hotel. He had,

I found, arrived two days after the crime, given a fictitious name, and departed very shortly afterwards without leaving any trace whatever of his movements.

I got hold of the hotel porters and officials and thoroughly pumped them. They seemed to remember Borowski pretty well, but as to where he had gone, or where he had directed the cab to be driven on his departure, they were entirely ignorant.

I asked the number of his room, which was supplied me ; and, as I had to stay somewhere, I thought I might just as well make the Grand Hotel my resting-place until I had been able to have another good hunt round, and also that I might be able yet to learn something more from the servants of the place, were it ever so little.

My perseverance was rewarded ; for, after a day or two looking round the hotel, asking all sorts of questions, and seeking every possible information, I succeeded in pressing one of the chambermaids into my confidence—the very maid, in fact, who had charge of Borowski's apartment.

CHAPTER II.

BUT the little vixen was a cautious, enterprising damsel, very pretty, very plump, and very German. She had attracted Borowski's attentions, and, chambermaid-like, had

retained them by her devices to make him and his apartment as comfortable as possible during his stay at the hotel—in fact, as we should say in England, Gretchen had thoroughly set her “cap” at Borowski, whose personal appearance, as I have already said, was not by any means ordinary. Borowski found her useful, as she knew Paris almost as well as her own native town, informed him where to purchase new clothes, change money, and gave help in a hundred-and-one other minor details, which were exceedingly useful to him in this his first and somewhat unusual visit to France.

I learned from all this that it was very evident that Borowski would not return to the Grand Hotel, even if he returned to the city at all, which was to my mind doubtful. I gathered from Gretchen, after a little further persuasion, that he had not favoured her with the address of his whereabouts, although he had gone so far as, in a conversation he had with her, to mention Dresden as probably one of the places he should visit. I made a mental note of the name of that city, and, with the assistance of further cajolery and flattery, got little Gretchen to admit that, “although she rather liked Borowski, still, as she thought he was not likely to come back, and would probably forget all about her, it was no use fretting herself about it; and that there were as good fish in the sea as ever were caught”—I forget the German equivalent for this expression—and so on.

The upshot of all this was that, with a compliment to her pleasing manner, a present of a pair of gloves, a brooch,

and the promise of an evening at the theatre—which, by the way, did *not* come off—I got this fickle-minded little domestic to tell me the names and addresses of all the shopkeepers she had recommended to Borowski, and, armed with these, I jumped into a cab and soon ran round and visited them all, the result being that I had no doubt whatever that a journey to Dresden was Borowski's full intention.

I bid adieu to Gretchen, who was in great distress at losing two probable sweethearts in so short a time, and the same night started for Dresden. When I arrived there, I found, with the assistance of the local police, whom I had previously entered into communication with, that Borowski had managed to change some of the bonds, and had stayed at an hotel in the city which I easily traced out. From there I discovered he had gone to Prague, changed some more bonds; thence to Vienna, where he was again fortunate in dealing with a further portion of the stolen property. From Vienna he journeyed to Buda-Pesth, and there I came to a full stop in my investigations, the thread, to my great annoyance and disappointment, being broken.

I could only account for the difficulty of further tracing Borowski's movements by the belief that when he arrived at Buda-Pesth he found himself possessed of quite sufficient ready money for his immediate purposes, and, therefore, did not find it necessary to run any further risk in changing. I may mention that, to increase the difficulties attending his capture, he had taken the precaution in each city or town he visited to assume a different name.

I don't know a single place in the world in which I should imagine it is easier for a foreigner to hide himself successfully than in Buda-Pesth. To begin with, there are something like four hundred thousand inhabitants, and there one meets some of almost every nation under the sun. So that neither a Russian, nor, indeed, any foreigner is conspicuous (except, perhaps, an Englishman, and he always is conspicuous wherever he may be. There is a something about him when in other countries which renders him always available for recognition—his dress and general style, I suppose). Again, the city is made up of, as it were, a number of separate towns all joined together, each of them in itself certainly distinct in appearance, yet together so much alike that you can hardly tell which portion of it you are in. I hunted about all day without success, tried almost every hotel in the place, and was beginning to give it up as a bad job, when I decided after dinner to visit a place of amusement—a kind of *café chantant*—and see whether I could get any trace of my man. It was a remarkably fast sort of place and was extensively patronised by the *demi monde*. I entered into conversation with several of the frail young ladies within, conversing about things in general and the peculiarities of the place in particular. One of them remarked to me in French, “Don't you know we rather pride ourselves upon this place ; we nickname it the ‘Exchange,’ for the simple reason that nearly all strangers who visit the city manage to find the place out and pay it a visit.” This rather interested me, and, producing Borowski's photograph,

I said, "This is a relative of mine, who is rather weak-minded. I have been sent to look for him, and I know he has visited this city, but cannot trace his present whereabouts. Can any of you assist me?" They all looked at the photograph curiously, when one of the girls exclaimed, "Why, that gentleman, a few nights ago, asked me after having supper with him, to show him to the railway station, as he said he was going to Oderberg, and I saw him into the train."

This was good news, and, tired as I was, I determined to leave for Oderberg that night. I did do so, and when I arrived there, after a long and tedious journey, found it, though a small place, an important junction, almost as intricate and bewildering as that of Clapham. It was very certain that he had not stayed in the town of Oderberg itself, my inquiries showed that, and he had therefore made a journey from there, but which route he had taken was a puzzle. I ran down to Kraka—no trace there—then on to Lemberg, with the same result. These two towns took me fully three days to work, and I thus lost this, to me, much important time on perfectly useless errands, which made me, as I found from inquiry of the young ladies at the café chantant, exactly six days behind my man. Still, I was gaining considerably, for when I left home I was, it will be remembered, quite seventeen days in the rear.

What to do now I didn't know in the least. Here was I nearly a week behind Borowski, at a frightful muddle, so to speak, of a junction, and not knowing for the life of me

which of the many directions to take, two already having proved unsuccessful. There I stayed, meditating, whilst the precious hours were passing and my quarry perhaps getting further away every minute.

At last I resolved that I would go on to Berlin, and risk his being, or having been, there ; and if I didn't see or hear anything more of him, it was on my way home, and that would be one comfort at all events. When I did reach Berlin I made my way at once to the detective department, and, with the assistance of the officials there, found after several days' arduous and irksome search, that Borowski had stayed for a few days at the Boersen Hotel, and had, to my great pleasure and relief, only left the night previously. Here was a find likely to prove a reward after all my fatigue and trouble. But Borowski had, even at this length of time, not lost his caution, for he carefully, at every place I found he stopped, avoided saying where he was next going to ; in fact, at several of the hotels he deliberately stated that, I suppose to "cross the scent," he was not leaving the town but going into private apartments. Therefore, at this period, the exact state of things was :—Borowski's destination unknown ; myself twenty-four hours behind Borowski.

It was very certain that he was not such a fool as to be making a return journey to London, where, the moment he had landed, he would have been recognised and seized. No ; he was far too wideawake than to run a risk of that kind, and must, in the ordinary course of things, have "made tracks" towards a wider field.

Carefully putting things together, I came to the conclusion that he had gone on to Hamburg, and from there intended making his way to America by one of the liners sailing from that port—which port, I may state, is a favourite one of most foreign wrongdoers, as they imagine, rightly or wrongly, that by taking that route they are less likely to be detected.

I telegraphed at once to the Hamburg police, giving a full description of Borowski and a list of all the aliases I had been able up to the present to find that he had used, asking them to look out for him at the chief hotels, as he seemed to have a weakness for staying in such places. I remained a little longer in Berlin, thinking that a few hours' further stay in that place would perhaps be of advantage to me, for, after all, Borowski might not have left it, but might be merely staying in some other quarter.

My suspense was a short one, for, to my surprise, I received in a very little time indeed a reply wire, saying that they had not only discovered Borowski, but had arrested him at one of the chief hotels upon the eve of his departure for New York, and that a large quantity of money had been found upon him.

I rushed off to Hamburg in great spirits, highly delighted, as my readers may justly imagine, with the turn things had taken, and in due course interviewed and arrested my "prisoner." I found among the papers which had been taken possession of, three deposit notes, indicating that Borowski had lodged the bulk of the proceeds of the bonds

with the Credit Lyonnais, Paris, the German Bank, Berlin, and had also forwarded a supply to a bank in London, in order, I suppose, that it might be convenient for it to be there should it be required.

It will be remembered that Romovitch had obtained, before repaying the solicitor, exactly £15,180; deducting what he had spent up to the time of Borowski's absconding, it may be safely assumed that the latter succeeded in decamping with about £15,000. After a lot of trouble and difficulty we managed to recover no less a sum than £15,300, that is, actually £300 more than the amount missing. This good and favourable turn of affairs is accounted for by the fact that a number of the bonds realised, on conversion into cash, much more than their par value. With the surplus, because only the nominal value of the bonds could be handed by the authorities over to Romovitch, the taxed costs of Borowski's prosecution were defrayed, he himself receiving from the Recorder—I had brought him on to London—a sentence of five years' penal servitude, which, it must be admitted, was not one day more than the rascal deserved.

One incident I must relate, as it was of no little interest to all concerned in the capture. Previous to bringing Borowski to London I had to have him properly and legally extradited by the Hamburg authorities, which caused a delay of about a month. He was, of course, lodged in the prison of that city, and in accordance with the usual custom there—a very sensible arrangement, which

might with very great advantage be adopted in this country—the apprehension was made public in the official records and in the daily papers, giving all particulars.

CHAPTER III.

ONE morning, shortly after these announcements, a lady and gentleman paid a visit to the gaol most anxious to see Borowski, as they thought he answered the description of a person who had robbed them when they were in Odessa some twenty years previously, but in a very peculiar manner. It appears that whilst staying at an hotel in Odessa they went out one day to visit some friends in a district about a mile away. They had at that time employed an interpreter, but on this particular day they did not avail themselves of his services, but went alone. It appears that the interpreter, as soon as the couple were well on their journey, went to the hotel and asked for their dressing-bag, saying that in their haste they had left it behind, and had sent him back for it. He was sent into their room (being known at the hotel) and told to get it himself, as he would probably know much better than they did the exact bag required. When in the apartment the interpreter, finding the bag locked, obtained a razor and easily cut it open, abstracted the contents, chiefly money, and decamped. Whilst doing

this he had dropped amulet which he wore, being somewhat superstitious.

This amulet was something of a curiosity, consisting of three hard dried beans, a tooth, and two small shells, and which, in its own particular language—amulets possess a distinct language, I am told, just in the same way that flowers, and fans, and cards do—expressed “fear nothing.” Borowski possessed all the superstitious characteristics of his countrymen, a large number of whom wear these ornaments much with the same feeling that an English sailor wears a child’s caul as a supposed preventative against drowning, and, as a natural consequence, was never without the trinket, and it was he who so long a time as twenty years before had dropped it. He was, in fact, the “interpreter” the lady and gentleman had engaged at Odessa, and was the man who had opened their bag and abstracted its contents, and they proved it to some extent by producing the amulet suddenly in his presence when they called at the gaol. He started and became very pale, as we all perceived, when he recognised it as his long lost property.

I secured further convincing proof of his guilt by obtaining information which left no doubt whatever upon the judicial mind that he was the same man who was in Odessa at the period stated, for I discovered that he had then been travelling about the world, for some time, afterwards returning to England.

I asked the lady why she had kept the trinket so long, whereupon she told me that it was something of a novelty

to her, being the first one she had ever seen, and her husband having obtained from a native the meaning of it, she had ever since become a little imbued with the same feeling as Borowski regarding it, and had, therefore, taken it with her on every journey she made.

There were also two additional strange and peculiar incidents about the case—one that the lady and gentleman should happen to be travelling through Hamburg just at the time of Borowski's arrest, the other that one of the aliases which my prisoner had made use of, notably the name he had gone by at Buda-Pesth, *i.e.*, Sitkoff, was the same he used at Odessa. I merely mention these details because, though so small in themselves, they had a very great deal to do with the further identification and punishment of Borowski ; for it is in these little, almost unexpected, matters, certainly never, at any time, anticipated to be discerned by even the “cutest” of wrongdoers, that the links in the chain of evidence are invariably, in some fashion or other, completed.

Romovitch expressed his satisfaction at the state of affairs by making me a present of £500 as a token of his regard for the manner in which the case had been worked through ; but, as in several other instances I have mentioned, this sum, being divided and subdivided ; deductions made for this, deductions made for that, and deductions made for half a dozen other comprehensible and incomprehensible funds ; I was duly rewarded with just a little under £100 as my share of the original amount Romovitch had so kindly placed at my disposal.

When the donor heard of this he expressed himself in terms which, although Russian, were evidently meant to be strong—unusually so. The £500, he said, was intended for me, and me alone, and I should have that sum ; but I explained that if he gave me another £500 I should only benefit in something like the same proportion ; and, to give practical effect to his particular desire he would have to hand over to the authorities no less than £2,500, out of which I should just receive the amount he intended me to have. As this suggestion was altogether too preposterous, and I dared not have received a single extra sixpence without reporting the fact to headquarters, under the pain of instant dismissal and thereby disgrace, he very kindly asked me to introduce him to my wife, to whom he made a gift of a very handsome seal-skin jacket, in a pocket of which he placed a Bank of England note for £100. So far, so good.

My wife, as all far-seeing, affectionate, and dutiful wives should do, gave me the money to take care of for her, and I duly placed it to the credit of the seldom-increasing and never very large account at my bankers. To my utter astonishment, within three days afterwards, as though I was never to have any peace at any price in connection with a reward which I was rapidly beginning to realise was becoming a not unmixed blessing, a detective sergeant came up to me and said, “ Mr. Moser, I want to know where you got that £100 note (giving the exact number) from, the other day ? ” Well, I thought this was strange, but rejoined, “ Why ? ” He then stated that the note I had paid into my

bank was a stolen one, and that he had traced it, in the usual way, to me. I was simply astounded ; the note was a good one, as the cashier noted, but after all it turned out to be a stolen one. My position was by no means an enviable one, and I heartily wished myself well out of it, as my readers can very well imagine. It was no light matter ; here was a stolen note, traced in the easiest possible manner to the possession of a detective, who must somehow clear up the difficulty and get out of a very compromising position. I hardly knew what to do, but after a little time I told the sergeant the exact circumstances of the matter, and I, to this day, remember well the faint sneer of disbelief upon his countenance and the slight curl of doubt upon his lips, for which I often wonder I didn't at the time create a breach of the peace. I was in a very ugly mess, indeed, for if Romovitch had gone away, who, public or officials, would have believed an apparently roundabout rigmarole of the kind I gave ? I should have had to make out " that my wife found the note in her jacket pocket on its arrival home," which was the exact truth and nothing but the truth, and then have been dismissed, and looked upon for the rest of my life as a kind of black sheep. Accepting a gratuity without reporting it was almost the gravest offence in the force, and as such, at least for the want of some substantial evidence to the contrary, the case would appear, in spite of anything I might say to my superiors ; but my wife—oh yes, my wife—she, like hundreds of other wives, would

express herself to the same effect, and in this particular case, why shouldn't she ?

I aggravated the offence, in a weak moment, by asking the sergeant not to report the circumstances to headquarters. This was responded to by another of those sneers which the wretch seemed to revel in, and I heartily regretted having suggested the idea at all, let alone to a man like this, who had never, purely from his envious spirit, been a friend of mine.

There is, perhaps, after all, a certain amount of fairness and justification on the part of the authorities in being so exceedingly stringent in the matter of rewards and gratuities, for in many instances that I could mention, instances which have come under my own personal cognisance, I have seen extremely mischievous results accrue from them, and which proved to be, in the long run, as so many traps for the officers weak enough to accept them without officially noting their receipt.

In due time the report, pretty considerably garnished, as you may be sure, by the sergeant, Bluster by name, reached Mr. Howard Vincent, the then chief. Bluster had detailed the whole of the circumstances and had not omitted to take advantage of my desire to suppress all knowledge of the matter. This he laid on with a pretty thick brush, or rather, pen, and very shortly afterwards I was called up before the "chief" and asked to go through the almost, under the circumstances, needless farce of an explanation. I told Mr. Vincent exactly what I had told Bluster, and also

frankly admitted having asked that individual not to report the affair, further stating that if Romovitch was still in London, I felt sure that he would be able to throw the right light upon the circumstances, for I couldn't for the life of me bring myself to think that Romovitch knew that the notes were stolen ones, as he seemed too sincere and too anxious to go out of his way to show his obligation to me to warrant my entertaining any suspicion of that kind.

Romovitch was accordingly hunted for, and fortunately was found just as he was about to return to Russia. A few hours more and I should have missed the opportunity of being able to clear up the doubts and suspicions which seemed to be showering down upon me pretty thickly. Romovitch of course, as I anticipated, soon made it very clear to Mr. Vincent that the note was intended solely for and given to my wife ; that he himself had given it in the manner exactly as I had stated. After testifying to this on affidavit, and relieving his mind pretty freely in some Russian of a still stronger description at the expense of the chief and everybody concerned with the "Yard," from the highest to the lowest, he left the office with an indignant look which would have cowed any and everybody but those concerned.

The testimony of Romovitch, I could perceive, had some effect upon my superiors, who began to look at the matter more from the point of view warranted by the facts of the case. But I was not allowed to go without punishment, and to my utmost disgust, after enjoying the confidence for

the time I had been connected with the service, after having distinguished myself in more instances than one, I was offered, with all the calmness with which official insolence is distinguished, the degrading option of retaining the £100, which, rightly speaking, belonged solely and exclusively to my wife, and leaving the service, *or* to hand over the £100, together with the whole of the gratuity, I had hitherto received in the case.

These were conditions which even at the present time I occasionally feel so intensely indignant about that I can scarcely believe myself that I did not at once dash into the faces of the assembled officials the papers containing this most impudent suggestion.

However, I managed to keep control of my feelings, and with the regard due to my future I accepted the latter option, and went off to my duty, humbled, injured, and disgusted.

It was very evident that the authorities themselves were not a little ashamed of their harshness, as in a few days afterwards I was once more called before Mr. Howard Vincent, who thereupon informed me that £200 would be invested for me in the New Three per Cents., and I should receive the yearly interest thereon as long as I remained in the service. I was very grateful to the Chief Commissioner (for whom I have the highest possible respect, and who, I am sure, would never *knowingly* permit a wrong to be done to any member of the force, in whatever capacity he might be employed), for this modification of my punishment, which

was everything to me when my character and promotion were so concerned.

The reader may wonder how it came to be that the stolen note should have reached, above all others, me, a detective. It happened thus : A robbery of a large number of Bank of England notes had occurred in the City, and the thief had managed to change a number of them for French ones at the office of a well-known money-changer near the Royal Exchange.

Romovitch, I learned, had been to precisely the same place at the recommendation of the solicitors, Messrs. Ward and Stavemhoff, whom he had again called on at Borowski's departure, seeking further advice from them. When he regained possession of his property, he had it placed in safe custody, with the exception, of course, of the money he required for his immediate wants. This he had in Russian rouble notes, and he, to make Mrs. Moser the present, exchanged some of them to the value of the £100. He was handed one of the stolen notes, and the numbers being known to the firm who had been robbed, the tracing of their whereabouts was a very simple matter indeed.

When things got nicely into working order again, and I felt affairs with my brother officers once more smooth, all suspicions allayed and doubts removed, I breathed pretty freely. I have often considered this case one of the most difficult and trying, considering all its bearings, that I ever had to contend with, and I sincerely hope that it may never be the lot of any of those at present at Scotland Yard to have

to undergo the mental and physical strain which, during that three months, from the first to the last of the whole of the trying circumstances, I had to undergo.

Romovitch returned to Russia as he had intended, but takes good care not to carry bags containing bonds or like valuables about with him now. I still hear occasionally from the old man, and he frequently refers—as far as I can make out from his very difficult Russian-English—to the matter, always concluding his epistles with a somewhat facetious commentary upon the Scotland Yard authorities, whom he looks upon with something approaching, if not disgust, at least pity.

THE END.

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